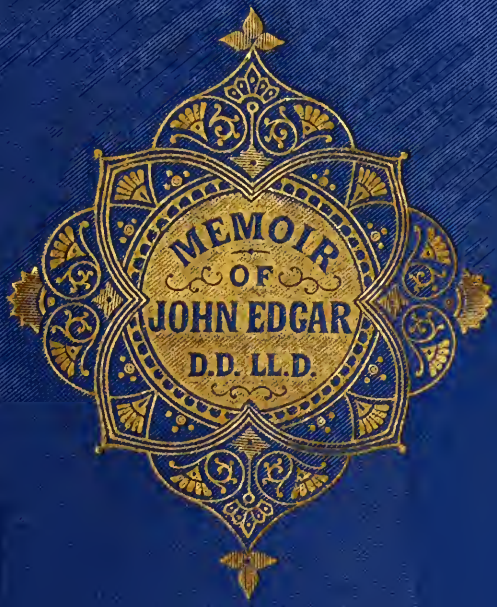
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Memoir

OF

JOHN EDGAR, D.D., LL.D.

W. D. KILLEN, D.D.

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OF

JOHN EDGAR, D.D., LL.D.,

PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY
FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN IRELAND

BY

W. D. KILLEN, D.D.,

A New and Revised Edition.

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Preface to the Second Edition.

DR. EDGAR had long intended to reprint a number of his works; and, after his death, some of them were found carefully corrected —evidently with a view to publication. The pressure of other engagements interfered with the accomplishment of his design: but he was unwilling to relinquish it; and, in his last illness—when he saw that recovery was hopeless—I was requested by him to undertake the service. In the letter communicating his anxiety on this subject, he suggested that it might be well for me to give some short historical account of his publications. He had been my friend and colleague for a quarter of a century; and I at once promised to do my utmost to fulfil his desires.

Dr. Edgar kept no diary to report the history of his inner life, or to register his views of passing occurrences; but, on looking over a variety of

documents which I was permitted to examine, I found that sufficient materials existed for a biography; and I could not divest myself of the conviction that it was my duty to prepare such a memorial. Dr. Edgar was one of the most useful men of his generation; he rendered important services to the Christian cause; he founded several of the public Institutions of Belfast: and he was among the ablest and most efficient ministers ever connected with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Surely such a man is entitled to something more than an obituary notice.

In the preparation of this Memoir I have had the use of a large scrap-book, containing numerous newspaper notices of Dr. Edgar and his works; some of which, when reproduced after the lapse of a generation, possess peculiar interest. I have, besides, had access to many letters addressed to him—ranging over a period of upwards of forty years. Personal friends have also supplied me with much information.

A few mistakes, which had crept into the work as it issued originally from the press, have been corrected in the present edition.

BELFAST, 28*th October*, 1868.

MEMOIR

OF

John Edgar, D.D., LL.D.

CHAPTER I.

DR. EDGAR'S BIRTH—HIS FATHER, DR. SAMUEL EDGAR, AND HIS ACADEMY AT BALLYNAHINCH—HIS CHOICE OF THE MINISTRY AND COLLEGIATE CAREER—THE BURGHERS AND ANTI-BURGHERS—CALL TO A SMALL CONGREGATION IN BELFAST — HIS DIFFICULTIES — THE BUILDING OF HIS MEETING-HOUSE AND THE REGIUM DONUM—HIS APPEARANCE AND MANNER—HIS EARLY MINISTRY—ATTENDS PUBLIC MEETINGS AND BECOMES INTERESTED IN THE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS OF THE TOWN—HIS ELDERS, ROBERT M'GEAGH AND ROBERT BAXTER—HIS INCREASING INFLUENCE—HIS STYLE OF PREACHING AND SPEAKING—THE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY—DR. TENNENT AND THE ORANGE SYSTEM.

EDGAR is a royal name, and it may be that royal blood flows in the veins of many who bear it. But the descendants of a king, removed from him at a distance of a thousand years, are often found in places very different from royal palaces; and if the Edgars of the North of Ireland are

sprung from an English sovereign, or, as some say, from a Scottish peer, it is certain that their immediate ancestors occupied a much more humble position. The family tradition is, that early in the last century, four brothers of the name emigrated from North Britain, who settled respectively at Castlewellan, Gilford, Saintfield, and Newtownards. They were farmers, and in not very affluent circumstances.

John Edgar was born at Magheranock, near Saintfield,* in March, 1798. When advanced in life he was often involved in controversy; and on one public occasion he said playfully that his mother had brought him forth "a man of contention," as she had introduced him into the world in the year of the Rebellion. His native neighbourhood was the scene of the most important struggle which then took place in Ulster; and on the 13th of June, 1798, when the conflict raged between the insurgents and the Royal troops, there lay hard by in the cradle an infant a few months old, whose memory will survive as long as the fame of the battle of Ballynahinch.

The Rev. Samuel Edgar, D.D., father of the subject of this memoir, was connected with the Secession church. Though less eminent than his son, he was a man of highly respectable talents and attainments. Deprived in childhood of parental guardianship, he had to contend in early life with a variety of difficulties; but, happily, a ministerial relative of his own

* Magheranock is about three miles from Ballynahinch, and one mile from Saintfield. When yet an infant, the family removed to Ballykine, where his father afterwards kept his academy.

name—father of the well known author of "The Variations of Popery"—kept an excellent school near Hillsborough, and, under his care, young Samuel was well grounded in the elements of literature. In 1793 he was ordained to the pastoral care of a congregation at Ballynahinch. His professional income was very small; and, as he soon had a family growing up around him, he found it necessary to provide for his increasing expenditure. He had a taste for communicating scholastic instruction; and, some time after he became a minister, he opened an academy which attained considerable reputation. One of the pupils of this seminary, and afterwards one of the assistants in its management, was a youth named James Thomson, even then remarkable for his acquirements in both science and literature. The assistant teacher in the academy at Ballynahinch became, in due time, head of the Mathematical Department in the Belfast Royal Academical Institution, and subsequently, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Glasgow. His son, Sir William Thomson, has recently earned world-wide fame as Consulting Electrician connected with the Great Eastern, when telegraphic communication was established between America and the United Kingdom.

In the early part of the present century no police existed in Ireland to preserve the peace; and, in a country town, when any dispute arose at a fair or market, it not unfrequently terminated in a boxing match or faction fight. The Seceding minister of Ballynahinch often found it necessary to interfere on such

occasions. He was much respected by all classes of the population; the sons of Belial did not care to meet his frown or encounter his rebuke; and the announcement of his appearance was sometimes quite sufficient to put an end to a quarrel. When told that he was coming to separate them, the combatants have been repeatedly known to give up the contest abruptly, and take to flight. Dr. Samuel Edgar occupied a high place in the estimation of his ministerial brethren. They signified very unequivocally their appreciation of his merits when they conferred on him the two most confidential offices they could bestow; for they appointed him Clerk of their Synod, and their Professor of Divinity.

The excellent parental training enjoyed by John Edgar soon produced good fruit; and there is reason to believe that the truth had made a saving impression on his heart long before he commenced his collegiate career. In after life he was slow to speak of his spiritual experience, and he abhorred the mere cant of profession; but he was always wont to express himself with unusual emphasis when he adverted to the importance of a father's instructions and a mother's prayers. His parents observed with the deepest interest the indications of his early piety. When yet a boy at school, he had turned his attention to the ministry, and had communicated his wishes to his father. The announcement was sweet to the good man's soul, but he cautioned the youth against a precipitate decision. Retiring with him to a grove at some distance from the

dwelling-house, he there engaged with him in prayer, and sought for him the guidance and the blessing of the Most High. That prayer was never forgotten by John Edgar. In more advanced years, when conversing confidentially with a friend, he would sometimes speak of the impression it produced.

John Edgar passed through the usual course of tuition in his father's academy, and when prepared to enter college, accompanied his fellow-student, James Thomson, to the University of Glasgow. He returned a second time to Scotland; but meanwhile the Belfast Academical Institution was opened, and the young candidate for the ministry completed his collegiate curriculum in the capital of Ulster. When at college he displayed superior talents, and won no less than four silver medals. He had a taste as well for classics as for mathematics; he delighted greatly in the productions of the Muse, and on one occasion bore off a prize for a poem on the death of the Princess Charlotte.* Few who knew him only in his later years, would have supposed that he had ever been much conversant with the ancient classics, for his conversation generally related to matters of a very different character; and yet, sometime before his death, when on a visit to a rural district, and when gazing on the pleasant pastoral scenery around him, he astonished a literary friend who had accompanied him to the spot, by repeating, without hesitation, a lengthened passage from one of the Eclogues of Virgil. When a young man

* See Appendix A.

he supported himself by teaching, and his literary character stood so high, that, at one period, his income from tuitions amounted to about £300 per annum. Early in 1819 he prepared for the Belfast press an edition of "Gough's Arithmetic," which was extensively circulated, and which was considered much superior to any preceding impression. The following note from the publishers is an interesting memorial of this fact:—

"DEAR SIR,—We feel great pleasure in stating that the 'Gough's Arithmetic,' which you corrected and improved for us, was done to our entire satisfaction.

"We also feel called on to state, that the edition corrected by you, has, since its first publication, now nearly five years ago, received a decided preference throughout the kingdom, and has been pronounced by many of the most eminent teachers of Arithmetic, the best edition of that work ever offered to the public.—We are, Sir, yours truly,

"SIMMS & M'INTYRE.

"Belfast, 2nd Dec., 1823.

"Rev. John Edgar."

In the beginning of the present century, the Seceders in Ireland, as in Scotland, were divided into two parties—the Burghers and the Anti-burghers. The schism originated in North Britain; and was caused by disputes as to the propriety of taking an oath administered to the burgesses in several of the borough towns in that country. This oath did not concern

Irish Presbyterians ; but the Seceders in Ulster entered into the controversy, and separated, like their brethren across the channel. Long before the close of the eighteenth century, the Anti-burghers had established a congregation in Belfast ; and, about the year 1814, the Burghers began to gather their adherents in the town into a worshipping society. Preaching was supplied to them, partly gratuitously ; and several years passed away before they were in a position to give a call to a minister. In 1818 the Irish Burghers and Anti-burghers coalesced ; and it was expected by many connected with the old Belfast Anti-burgher congregation that the new Burgher erection would now be extinguished ; but its members were not at all prepared for such an alternative. Though their resources were small, and their numbers few, they resolved to maintain a separate existence ; and, soon after the son of the Professor of Theology obtained license, they invited him to become their pastor. Though the prospect thus presented to him was not very encouraging, he agreed to accept the call. The denomination to which he belonged was uninfluential and unfashionable ; and the members of his flock—amounting only to fourteen families, and twenty or thirty other individuals —were almost all in very limited circumstances. The annual stipend promised was £40, late Irish currency,* and it was unsafe to reckon on the punctual payment of that slender salary. No Regium Donum could be immediately expected, and Government then allowed

* £36 18s. 5½d. of the present currency.

only £40 late currency to the ministers of the smaller Seceding congregations. The people owned no place of worship; most of the inhabitants looked on them with small favour; and yet, without large assistance from the public, they could not undertake to build even a very humble meeting-house. But the energy of the young pastor was indomitable, and he eventually overcame all difficulties. On the 14th of November, 1820, he was ordained to the pastoral charge by the Seceding Presbytery of Down in the Independent Chapel, Donegall Street, kindly lent for the occasion; and, for a considerable time afterwards, he preached statedly in a hired room in Commercial Court. After much painful solicitation, and enormous fatigue, he collected the sum required to enable him to erect a church. The age of Christian liberality had not then commenced in the capital of the North. Men of ample means, who did not scruple to indulge otherwise in a lavish expenditure, had almost nothing to spare for the cause of God. Mr. Edgar had to travel far and wide, both in Scotland and England, in quest of the necessary funds; and, though the cost of the building was only £500, he often told afterwards that much of it was collected in half-crowns, or in coins of even smaller magnitude and value; and that his subscription list contained the names of not less than two thousand donors. In November, 1821, the little tabernacle, capable of accommodating about 250 persons, was in such a state of forwardness that the congregation could meet in it for worship.

This building is now surrounded by handsome and expensive edifices; but forty-seven years ago the neighbourhood presented a very different aspect. The inhabitants of Belfast were then barely equal in amount to the one-fourth of its present population, and the meeting-house stood in an outskirt of the town, on a spot which, shortly before, had been part of the bed of a mill-dam. Persons still living well recollect the time when the skater repaired there in the winter season to indulge in his favourite pastime. A church in such a locality, and somewhat difficult of access, was not likely to attract worshippers; but the congregation could not afford to pay a high rent for their accommodation, and a better site on the same terms was unattainable. It was opened for divine service by the Rev. John Rogers, of Glascar, and the Rev. John Reid, of Drumbanagher — two of the best preachers in the Secession Church — one of whom conducted the worship at noon, and the other in the evening. At that time the building could only be approached by a line of planks laid along the ground for a considerable distance; and woe to the unhappy pedestrian who happened to slip off the narrow wooden pathway, for on either side he might sink ankle-deep, if not knee-deep, into a slough of most unsavoury odour!

At present, the Regium Donum is dispensed to new congregations according to fixed rules recognised by Government; but at that period no such arrangement existed. The minister, after ordination, transmitted an application to the Irish Lord-Lieutenant, and his

success depended very much on the influence he could bring to bear in high quarters in support of his memorial. Though the young pastor of Alfred Place had taken the usual steps to procure a share of the Parliamentary provision, he remained for years without any other ministerial income than that derived from the stipend of his congregation. This was quite insufficient for his maintenance in a town like Belfast; but, as he was still unmarried, and as he meanwhile retained some of his more lucrative tuitions, he was in no danger of pecuniary embarrassment. The long delay of the Regium Donum was, however, somewhat perplexing. He was aware that his application was not very favourably entertained, and he had reason to suspect that he was suffering from adverse representations made to Government; but he could not tell from what quarter the opposition proceeded. Long after he obtained the grant, a friend in the Irish office put into his hands three memorials, which fully explained the mystery. The subjoined is a copy of one of these documents :—

"*To His Excellency Earl Talbot,*
"*Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.*
"*The Memorial of* * * * *

"Most humbly Sheweth—That your Memorialist is an inhabitant of the town of Belfast, and pays direct taxes to His Majesty's Government; that the Presbytery of Down, named Seceders, have in this town, on the 14th inst., ordained a young man, son to one of its members, as minister of eight families, and a few

individuals—making in all thirty ;* that they have no meeting-house, and that the meeting-house belonging to the other congregation of Seceders could conveniently accommodate them is certain ; that there is no necessity for another congregation of Seceders in this town, except to oppress the country in paying a bounty to one whose services are only desired by a few ; that Memorialist will prove the statement to be true in every part ; that, as the civilisation of the inhabitants of this town cannot be much promoted, nor the Government much strengthened, by the services of this minister in Belfast ; and, as the pressure of the times is so generally felt, Memorialist prays that your Excellency will not include, in the estimates for 1821, to be laid before Parliament for Ireland, a bounty for eight families and a few individuals—making in all not more than thirty—who could be well accommodated in the first congregation without increasing the taxation or national debt.—And your Memorialist, as in duty bound, will ever pray."

At this time there were only two places of Presbyterian worship in Belfast in which the doctrines of the Westminster Confession were faithfully expounded, and both were filled to overflowing. One of them was quite overcrowded ; and the demand for accommodation in it was so great that the occupier of a large pew in a good position could have sold his possession for one hundred guineas.

* The Call, which is still preserved, is signed by thirty-nine names.

During the long period of the delay of the Regium Donum, Mr. Edgar did not neglect to employ all the influence of which he could avail himself, to overcome the hesitation of the Irish Government. On one occasion he visited Dublin, armed with a letter of introduction from a highly respectable lady in the north to a gentleman of distinction in the Irish metropolis. This letter has been preserved, and after the lapse of more than forty years may be read with interest. It is evident that his lady friend possessed no little discernment, and the young minister certainly did not disappoint her expectations. "I beg," said she to her Dublin correspondent, "you will accept my warm thanks for your kind activity in the cause of Mr. Edgar, who will convey this to you, being anxious to go himself to try what is best to be done. He has got testimonials from Lord Donegall and the Sovereign of Belfast, which, I should think, would be of more service than a petition from the congregation; but he will be able to judge when he has had an opportunity of talking with you and with those who know best about such things. You need not give yourself any trouble about paying him attention, for he does not expect anything of that sort; and, being uncouth in his manners and appearance, you would not be able to discover his sterling worth in the short time you would have an opportunity of seeing him, and till he is turned inside out he has little to recommend him; but I feel happy in the thought that in befriending and assisting him, you are furthering the cause of the Gospel, for he

is indeed a true Christian, and promises to be a most useful one."

Mr. Edgar was not long settled in Belfast when he began to take an active part in the management of its benevolent and religious institutions. Though he derived little influence from his congregation, other circumstances conspired to give him a respectable social standing. He was known to be a young minister of ability, and son of the Secession Professor of Theology. The Belfast Academical Institution, founded on the principle of United Education, had for years to contend against no little obloquy; his father had won the regard of its friends by his steady advocacy of its claims; and when the seminary was opened for collegiate instruction, Dr. Samuel Edgar himself was the first theological professor who lectured to students within its walls. His son, after ordination, attended the public meetings of societies in which ministers were expected to take an interest, and occasionally made his appearance on the platform. If there was any likelihood that he would be required to speak, he was sure to be carefully prepared. If the time was fully and profitably occupied by others, he remained silent; but if a fair opportunity of addressing the audience was presented, he generally said something which made an impression. He was soon placed on a few committees; and the skill and energy he displayed in the management of business, gradually led to his appointment on boards of greater consequence.

The Destitute Sick Society ranks among the charit-

able institutions of Belfast which he was mainly instrumental in establishing. He wrote its reports for several years, and was otherwise most efficient as a member of its committee. He also rendered good service in the management of the Bible Society. The Religious Tract Society, founded in 1815, remained for years in a very feeble and languishing condition; but in 1824, when Mr. Edgar became its secretary, it immediately assumed a new aspect. He applied himself with much ardour to its reconstruction. By leasing a wareroom in a central locality, and appointing a zealous and prudent salesman, he secured its stability and enlarged its usefulness. An apartment attached to the depository in Waring Street long continued to be the place where the committees of many of the religious societies of the town statedly assembled. The Ulster Religious Tract and Book Society became, in a short time, self-supporting, and did more to disseminate sound religious literature throughout the country than any other concern of the kind in Ireland.

At this time the Trinitarian controversy agitated the northern province, as the movement had already commenced which issued in the withdrawal of the Arians from the Synod of Ulster. During the struggle, the Religious Tract and Book Society rendered important service to the orthodox cause. It republished a work on the Trinity, by Professor Moses Stuart, of Andover, which, with an introduction by Mr. Edgar, was bought up with avidity. On the question of the Sonship, Professor Stuart differed from the Westminster

divines; but his views, on the whole, were sound and judicious. His book was written in a clear, temperate, and agreeable style; and the Belfast reprint was very seasonable and useful.

Though the church which assembled in Alfred Place was small, it contained some elements of rare excellence. A very few of those who signed the call to the young minister still remain to adorn their Christian profession, and delicacy forbids any more distinct allusion to survivors; but there can be no impropriety in making mention of two of the elders of the congregation, who were called to their reward before their honoured pastor. Mr. Robert M'Geagh, who died in 1864, at the mature age of eighty, was one of the original members of the Alfred Place Session. Sound in doctrine, and strict in practice, he was quite in his element when teaching in the Sabbath-school, or attempting to reclaim the profligate, or praying by the bed-side of the dying believer. Though not without a weighty share of domestic sorrow, his cheerfulness never deserted him; and age seemed not to impair the vigour of his tiny frame. When he crossed the streets on an errand of mercy, even when approaching fourscore, he could have exhibited the agility of a youth of twenty-one. Mr. Robert Baxter, who died a few days after Mr. M'Geagh, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, though moving in a very humble sphere, was another elder of whom his minister often spoke in terms of affectionate regard. He was indeed a choice specimen of a good old Puritan. His

gift of prayer was extraordinary; he had a vigorous intellect; he was richly endowed with natural eloquence; and, had his powers been cultivated by education, he would have been a most excellent public speaker.

Notwithstanding the disadvantages of his position, the young pastor of Alfred Place continued steadily to rise in public estimation. His life was exemplary; his style of preaching, though somewhat florid, was bold and original; his activity in works of benevolence was great; and his perseverance was invincible. A few years after his settlement in Belfast, when any question of importance, in its religious bearings, was about to be debated by the citizens, he was generally expected to take some part in the discussion. He was, however, by no means a favourite with many of his fellow-townsmen. He was a Protestant and a Calvinistic Presbyterian to the core; and there was an outspoken independence about him which the old leaders of public opinion in the borough did not always admire. He certainly was little indebted for any degree of popularity he enjoyed to his personal appearance. He was robust and well-proportioned, and somewhat above the middle size; but his complexion was swarthy, his features strongly marked, and his general aspect might have betokened a descent from one of the sable sons of Africa. His manner also was abrupt; and his voice, though good and strong, wanted those silver tones by which some speakers are so greatly recommended. But, though

his gestures were not unfrequently grotesque, he had carefully studied the principles of elocution; he knew well how to put his arguments; and a critic might have found it difficult to detect anything amiss in the language of the rough orator. His observations were always striking and sensible; and, though cautious men often thought him rather rash, the candid portion of the public began to give him credit for honesty and manliness.

Some years before the appearance of the minister of Alfred Place on the stage of public life, Mr. Wilberforce, and his supporters in Parliament, had won their first great victory in the cause of Negro Emancipation. The African slave trade was proscribed, and every bondsman who set his foot on British soil was declared free. But slavery still flourished in the colonies; and, under various pretexts, the unholy traffic was continued. Mr. Edgar joined heartily with those who laboured to effect the complete extinction of the system; and some of his best speeches on a Belfast platform were made during the struggle which immediately preceded its final overthrow. In August, 1832, on the approach of a general election, he occupied the chair at a meeting of the Committee of the Belfast Anti-Slavery Society, when it was resolved that "the real friends of freedom and humanity ought to be satisfied with nothing less than the immediate abolition of slavery throughout the British dominions; and that the electors of Belfast be earnestly recommended to withhold their support

from every candidate not known as the decided advocate of this principle." Throughout life he was known as the friend of freedom all over the world; and, long before the commencement of the late civil war in America, he was one of those Irish Presbyterian ministers who kept a watchful eye on the correspondence between his own church and the Old School Assembly. He maintained that every letter from the brethren in this country should contain a firm remonstrance against slavery in the United States.

Almost from his first appearance before the Belfast public, Mr. Edgar was acknowledged as a man of mark, and his proceedings were observed with no little interest. A few years after his ordination he came into collision with a gentleman then well known and greatly respected by the community. Dr. Tennent, father of Robert James Tennent, Esq., late M.P. for Belfast, made a severe newspaper attack upon him because he had joined what was called the Reformation Society, and had taken part in a series of controversial discourses against Romanism. His well-meaning censor evidently feared that the young preacher was about to identify himself with the Orange party, and thus intensify those political heart-burnings which have so long proved the bane of Ireland. Mr. Edgar replied to his aged assailant with great spirit, ability, and good temper. Whatever may have been the secret motives which prompted the founders of the Reformation Society, he had certainly no idea of engaging in a political crusade. He was

guided simply by religious considerations, and he could see no reasonable objection to the temperate discussion of the tenets of Popery on the platform or in the pulpit. To the Orange system, he was decidedly opposed. He believed that it could claim the support of no honest and enlightened Presbyterian. In Ulster, it has done unutterable mischief—widening the breach between Romanists and Protestants, and fostering the worst feelings among the lower classes of the population.

CHAPTER II.

MR. EDGAR'S APPOINTMENT AS PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY—HIS MARRIAGE—HIS CONNEXION WITH THE BELFAST ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION—HIS GEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY—HIS CONTROVERSY WITH BISHOP CROLLY—HIS INCOME—COMMENCES THE TEMPERANCE AGITATION—STATE OF SOCIETY AT THAT TIME AS TO DRINKING USAGES—HIS EARLIEST APPEALS ON THE SUBJECT OF TEMPERANCE—FIRST TEMPERANCE SOCIETY IN IRELAND—GEORGE W. CARR—BISHOP DOYLE—SERMONS ON TEMPERANCE—FORMATION OF A TEMPERANCE SOCIETY IN BELFAST—EXTENSION OF THE MOVEMENT TO SCOTLAND AND ENGLAND—ALL DENOMINATIONS UNITE IN IT.

FEW years after his ordination, Mr. Edgar stood so high in the opinion of his brethren, that, on the death of his father, on the 17th of October, 1826, he was, in the following month, unanimously elected by the Secession Synod to the vacant Professorship of Theology. At that time, there was no Government endowment attached to the chair, and the entire emolument of the office amounted only to £50 per annum. The students were not numerous;—the course of instruction extended over four years; and each session was of three months' duration. If the demand for preachers was urgent, the curriculum was curtailed. The Secession ministers then amounted

to about one hundred and twenty; and though the profits of the appointment presented little stimulus to competition, the Synod paid no common tribute of honour to one of the youngest of its members, when it chose him as its teacher of theology. He had a very short time for preparation, as the session commenced a few weeks after his appointment; but his inaugural lecture fully sustained the expectations of his friends. Those who still survive, and who were that day present in the Common Hall of the Royal Institution, cannot forget the impression it produced. The lecturer could not well avoid a reference to his predecessor in the chair, then so recently removed; and as he approached the subject, the feelings of the affectionate son for a moment choked his utterance: but he speedily recovered; and as he proceeded to speak of the claims of theology, and the excellency of the Scriptures, and the blessed work with which the pastor is occupied, he kindled into enthusiasm, and poured forth a stream of glowing eloquence. As a professor, he had no taste for the minute dissection of theological systems, and he did not care to enter into the subtleties of mental analysis. In lecturing, as in other matters, he was guided very much by impulse; and he accordingly took up topics in his class, not in the order of their logical arrangement, but as they happened to make an impression on his own ardent mind. He delighted to exhibit the grand outlines of the theology of the Reformation, and he could expatiate with telling power and pathos on its practical

applications. He watched over the conduct of his students with parental vigilance, enlisted them in works of benevolence, and often displayed a singular knowledge of their individual capabilities.

The pastor of Alfred Place preached frequently in outposts around Belfast, and, week after week, intimated from the pulpit on the Lord's Day, the localities where he intended to officiate. The village of Whitehouse enjoyed a full share of his ministrations. It began to transpire that he was often drawn there by a loadstone of irresistible attraction; and at length the newspapers announced that, on the 24th day of September, 1828, the reverend Secession Professor of Theology was married, by the Rev. Professor Cairns, to Susanna, daughter of Thomas Grimshaw, Esq. of Whitehouse. The Grimshaws had long been well known among the mercantile community of the north of Ireland, and had been distinguished by their enterprise and public spirit. Some of them had, unhappily, gone over to the Unitarians; but the family now joined by Mr. Edgar, had continued to walk in the ways of orthodoxy. The young professor was not particularly handsome; and some were astonished that he had won the hand of so fair a partner; but as he rose in fame and influence, it began to be admitted that the lady had shown no little discernment in the selection of a husband. This union greatly promoted his domestic comfort. Four of their children died in infancy, and their house was not free from the afflictions incident to humanity; but it was, withal, a happy

home ; and though the widow now mourns his loss, she has the satisfaction to know that, after having nearly completed the period assigned by the Hebrew lawgiver as the term of man's pilgrimage on earth, he has passed away to a better inheritance, amidst demonstrations of respect, such as mere wealth or station can never purchase.

The Belfast Academical Institution then consisted of a Collegiate, as well as a School Department. The Collegiate Department was provided with a staff of professors for the education of students in science and literature, and with two professors of theology—one for the Secession Synod, and the other for the Synod of Ulster. The professors were associated together in a Faculty entrusted with the general charge of collegiate arrangements; and when Mr. Edgar was appointed to the Chair of Theology, he became a member of this Board of Supervision. In this new position, he repeatedly evinced his decision of character. Complaints had been often made against the Institution as under the influence of Arians; and various circumstances gave no little plausibility to the imputation. Many who were on its boards of managers and visitors were connected with Anti-Evangelical congregations ; and two of the professors, on whom students for the ministry were required to attend, were avowed Unitarians. But, as it did not appear that there had been any attempt to tamper with religious principle by those who communicated literary instruction, Mr. Edgar united for years with other orthodox ministers

in upholding the reputation of the Seminary. When, however, he was satisfied that there was any real danger from unsound teaching, he at once sounded the trumpet of alarm. Though a member of the College Faculty, he promptly concurred with the Secession Synod in withdrawing their students from the class of Moral Philosophy, over which a professor, with whom they were dissatisfied, had been appointed to preside. At a later period, when a lecturer on chemistry advanced sundry objectionable statements in a discourse delivered at a public meeting in the Institution, Professor Edgar challenged the philosopher as virtually impugning the teaching of revelation. A long controversy followed relating to the exact amount of information which geology supplies. Several literary gentlemen took part in this discussion. In a series of learned communications to the editor of the *Belfast News-Letter*, Dr. Drummond, Professor of Anatomy and Botany, defended the lecturer; Dr. Stevelly, Professor of Natural Philosophy, with equal ability and erudition, supported Professor Edgar. The controversy, on the whole, was not without good results. It was clearly shown that the conclusions of infidel geologists are absurdly premature, and that the Mosaic account of the creation remains unshaken, notwithstanding the attacks of its flippant assailants.

During the progress of this geological discussion, Mr. Edgar became involved in another controversy of a quite different character. He was attacked by Dr. Crolly, Roman Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor,

and afterwards Primate of Armagh, for a speech made by him at a public meeting, in which he had exposed the pretended miracles of Popery. A woman in Pipe Lane had, it appears, assured him that a priest had ejected the devil out of a neighbour, and had exhibited the expelled evil spirit on a plate in the form of a large eel. Dr. Crolly discredited the statement made by Mr. Edgar, and attempted to turn him into ridicule; but the bishop was soon taught that he had roused a rather troublesome antagonist, for, in a letter addressed to him in one of the Belfast newspapers, Mr. Edgar proved that the Breviary, to the truth of which Dr. Crolly was solemnly pledged, abounded in tales quite as puerile and extravagant. The story of the eel greatly irritated many of the Romanists; and about this time, the minister of Alfred Place Church received, through the Post Office, one of those threatening letters* which, in Ireland, have been too frequently the precursors of wilful murder. But "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them;" and Romish malignity was never permitted to injure one hair of the head of the fearless preacher.

Some time after his appointment to the professor-

* The following is an exact copy of the letter:—

"BELFAST, 25*th Febry.*, 1832.

"EDGAR,—You had better quit rediculing our Religion because if you do not the result will be you will get the kill of the Bear some night and we will not ask you to tell who It was give you it Likewise you had better keep your tongue Quiet about Pipe Lane and the Eell.—Yours &c.,

"PADDY FEARNOT, P.P."

ship, his Chair of Theology was endowed by Government with £100 per annum. As his expenditure was now rapidly increasing, this grant was a very seasonable addition to his resources. He often thankfully acknowledged that, throughout life, he had always a comfortable maintenance. But, though placed above the anxieties of want, he never enjoyed affluence. Many who have marked the munificence of his donations to public objects, may be astonished to learn that, with the exception of a short period immediately before he resigned the charge of his congregation, his professional income never much exceeded £320 per annum. It was often much less.

About three years after his appointment as professor, he commenced the great movement which soon made his name familiar to hundreds of thousands all over the empire. Temperance Societies have not extinguished drunkenness ; but the views and habits of a large portion of society have been wonderfully improved since they were organised. The younger section of the present generation can scarcely estimate the benefits which the advocates of the temperance cause have conferred on the community. Forty years ago, the use of ardent spirits was increasing throughout the three kingdoms with fearful rapidity. During the ten years preceding 1829, the consumption was doubled. The article was regarded by many as a necessary of life ; and the proposal to give up the use of it was denounced as extremely perilous, if not utopian. Every soldier had his daily rations of strong

drink ; every ship which went to sea was furnished with a daily allowance for every sailor during the voyage. Whisky was to be found in every house, and was employed as a remedy for almost every malady. If an infant was sick, punch was administered ; if a man was dying, he was sustained by the same cordial ; if a birth took place, the glass was handed round ; if a death occurred, all who attended the funeral were qualified, by what was called a dram, for travelling to the place of interment. If a public conveyance was about to start, the passengers fortified themselves against the weather by a little grog ; and at every stage of the journey, the dose was repeated. No bargain could be perfected, no debt could be paid, no undertaking could be commenced, without a libation. If one neighbour invited another to his house, and failed to set before him the bottle and its appurtenances, he was deemed guilty of a sad breach of the laws of hospitality. Whisky was kept in the session-room of almost every Presbyterian congregation ; and when the preacher descended from the pulpit, he was presented with a glass, either to counteract exhaustion, or to ward off some supposed danger which his exertion had created. He was sometimes prepared by a dram for his sacred duties. As he visited his flock, he was invited to partake of whisky in every dwelling ; and if he persisted in refusing, he was in danger of being reputed proud or unsocial. Men in all ranks of life laboured under strange delusions as to the properties of ardent spirits ; and multitudes, overtaken by

diseases created by the corrupting influence of the social atmosphere, were passing away rapidly to the grave.

The Temperance Reformation, like many other extensive social changes, had small beginnings. It originated in the United States; and the Rev. Joseph Penney, an Irish Presbyterian who had emigrated to America, prepared the way for its introduction into Ulster. Mr. Penney, who belonged originally to the congregation of Drumlee, had been brought up under the pastoral care of the Rev. James Porter, one of the ablest and most exemplary ministers of the Secession Church. When a young man, he had conducted a flourishing academy in Ballymena; and some of the natives of that town still remember how much he was then respected. In the summer of 1829, he paid a visit to his native country; and, full of zeal for the extension of temperance societies, earnestly pressed their claims on the attention of many of his Irish brethren. Professor Edgar, who had formerly been his fellow-student, carefully weighed his arguments, and promptly determined to make the cause his own. He had just been appointed by a local committee to draw up an address to the public on the best means of discouraging the sale and consumption of ardent spirits on the Lord's Day; and he believed he had now discovered the true solution of the problem. He inaugurated his proceedings by opening his parlour window, and pouring out into the court before his house in Alfred Street, the remaining part of a gallon of old

malt whisky purchased, some time before, for family consumption. A few days after this decisive step, he prepared the following letter for publication in the newspapers:—

"*To the Editor of* ———.

"SIR,—My own attention, and, I trust, that of the public, has been arrested by notices in your late numbers, of efforts made in Belfast for promoting the sanctification of the Sabbath. These have been directed to such abuses of the Sabbath as the sailing of steamboats, keeping of newsrooms open, running of stage-coaches and other vehicles, the exposure to sale of various articles, and, worst of all, the sale of spirituous liquors. From the special efforts made to abolish this last evil, there seems to be a just impression of its enormity.

"I do not intend to enter into any discussion respecting the nature or efficacy of the means of reformation used. I take for granted that by the penalties of the law we shall be able to stop all unnecessary travelling, and close on the Sabbath all dram-shops. But will any benevolent man be content with this? Certainly not. Experience shows that cessation from labour without religious and moral instruction, results in dissipation and excess more injurious to mind and body than unremitted toil. The Sabbath, as a mere holiday, has always exercised terrific demoralizing influence, and there is no alternative for man but to keep it holy, or waste away by its toil or dissipation.

"To promote the true sanctification of the Sabbath, the means employed must be moral. To promote a genuine, not an external, transient reformation, moral suasion must be employed—the impartial means of Scriptural argument addressing both rich and poor. To promote general reformation, there must be a general influencing of public feeling. You have for this purpose much in your power. Begin the work, and you will be supported. To attack at once the whole host of Sabbath-breakers, might be dangerous or unwise. Let there be, therefore, a division of labour, and begin with the most flagrant and inveterate source of profanation—the sale and use of spirituous liquor. We can never secure effectual permanent cure for this monster ill on the Sabbath, except by putting an end to the customary use of spirits on all days. To have sanctity on the Sabbath, there must be temperance all the year round. No sober man will question that the improper use of intoxicating liquors has been the source of evils of incalculable magnitude, both to the temporal and eternal interests of individuals, families, and communities; that the prevalence of this vice has a fatal efficacy in hindering the success of all the common means appointed for the moral and religious improvement of men, and that the various measures which the friends of Christian morality have adopted, though not altogether unsuccessful, have been insufficient to give any effectual check to this desolating evil. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that some system of instruction, and of

action, be immediately adopted, to make a steady and powerful impression on the present and following generations, and by thus ultimately effecting a change of public sentiment and practice in regard to the use of intoxicating liquors, put an end to that widely-spreading intemperance which has already caused such desolation, and which threatens destruction to the best interests of this great kingdom. Such a proposal, I know, will be received as visionary by a great number of sober men. They will bid me count the number of distilleries, spirit stores, and dram-shops in the kingdom; the number of rich and poor, the trade and business of whose life is drinking, the multitudes of *sober* men—men never seen drunk, who drink each more ardent spirits than would kill half a dozen men of common constitution; the numbers of temperate men who consider a daily portion of ardent spirits absolutely necessary to their bodily health, for cooling them when warm, and warming them when cold; giving an appetite, helping digestion, and insuring sound sleep. All this, and far more, I see standing mountain-high in the road of reformation; but all this, and far more, cries aloud upon every temperate man, every benevolent man, for prompt and decided exertion. Let it be distinctly understood, as a first principle in commencing reformation, that it is not necessary, for insuring success, to reform the present generation of drunkards, though the plan proposed affords the fairest prospect even for their reformation. It is not with them, however, but with the temperate mem-

bers of society, that we have at first to deal. And here is our argument to them. It is impossible that the present system of drinking, and the manufacture and sale of spirituous liquor, can be supported by drunkards alone. If you that are temperate unite against them, they must go down, for by you they are maintained and made respectable. The present generation of drunkards may give them a feeble support for a time, but they will be buried in their graves. As you are temperate men, the relinquishing of ardent spirits must be a small sacrifice; and knowing, as you may, that the support or ruin of drunkenness is in your power, you cannot refuse to make a small sacrifice for promoting incalculable good. If you refuse, you are not temperate, or not benevolent. I fear not, therefore, to proclaim that it is in the power of the temperate to stop intemperance by employing the means which God has put into their hands.

"This assertion is not made in the spirit of idle speculation, or of blind zeal. I appeal to facts. I rest on a mass of incontrovertible evidence, a portion of which is taken from public authentic accounts of the success of the labours of 'Temperance Societies' in the United States of America. These Societies, entertaining views which I state almost in their own words, have set the following noble and praiseworthy objects before them:—To make appropriate communications by pamphlets, correspondence, and personal interviews, to ministers of the gospel, to physicians, and others, and to consult and co-operate with

them for guarding those under their influence against the evils of intemperance; to take pains by all proper methods to make a seasonable and salutary impression in relation to this subject, on those favoured with a public and refined education, and destined in various ways to have a leading influence in society; to make it a serious object to introduce into the publications of the day essays and addresses on the subject of intoxicating liquors, and to induce teachers to labour to impress the minds of the young with the dreadful evils to which all are exposed who indulge in the use of strong drink; to make affectionate and earnest addresses to Christian Churches, to parents and guardians, to children, apprentices and servants, and all other persons; and to set clearly before them the effect of spirituous liquors on health, reputation, and all the temporal and eternal interests of men; to urge them by the most weighty arguments to keep themselves at a distance from this insidious and destructive foe; to do whatever is practicable and expedient towards forming voluntary associations, for the purpose of promoting the ends of the societies, and, in general, to labour, by all suitable means, and in reliance upon the Divine blessing, to fix the eyes of all on the magnitude of the evil which the Societies aim to prevent, and the immeasurable good they aim to secure; and to produce such a change of public sentiment, and renovation of the habits of individuals, and the customs of the community, that in the end, temperance, with its unnumbered blessings, may universally prevail.

"Now it is unnecessary for me to compare the obstacles to the success of these Societies with those which must be encountered by similar societies in our country. It will be sufficient for me to quote a passage from an address delivered before the New Hampshire Medical Society, in 1827, by their President, R. D. Mussey, M.D.:—'From the Marshals' returns, and from an elaborate calculation by a distinguished gentleman of our State, we may fairly set down the quantity of ardent spirits consumed in the United States in a single year, at sixty millions of gallons. This will give to every individual man, woman, and child, including bond and free, five gallons each. Deducting the slaves and children under ten years of age, it will give to the rest not less than eight gallons each.' The American Temperance Societies had to commence their work on a population, each of whom drank at an average, eight gallons of spirits annually. If poor Ireland be worse than this, it is bad enough! And what, notwithstanding all obstacles and opposition, have these societies done? The second anniversary of the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance was held at Boston, in January, 1829, and in its report I find the following facts, amidst a vast number of others:—Nearly five hundred societies, containing 25,000 members, for promoting temperance, have been established in the United States. Since their establishment, there have been upwards of five hundred well authenticated instances of habitual drunkards reformed. At the commencement of 1829,

there were a hundred thousand persons acting on the principle of abstinence from spirituous liquors. Many merchants and mechanics who formerly traded, some of them largely, in ardent spirits, have, from conscientious scruples, abandoned the trade. Resolutions to abstain from ardent spirits have been passed by thirty-four Synods, Presbyteries, Methodist Conferences, and other religious bodies—by twenty-five militia companies, and by the officers of four regiments—by ten medical societies, and by all the lawyers in the counties of Essex and Morris, New Jersey. All the lawyers in Berkshire, Massachussets, at the Circuit Court in Lennox, in November last, removed ardent spirits from their tables, and directed the keepers of the houses where they were accustomed to board, to supply them no more. The House of Representatives of the New Hampshire Legislature agreed to similar abstinence during their session. By the influence of Temperance Societies, the consumption of ardent spirits has been diminished one half in New England, and one third throughout the remainder of the United States. Can nothing, then, be done for Ireland? I answer, and I trust that every good man will answer with me, there can—there must. I repeat again that it is in the power of the temperate to put an end to intemperance. Let the temperate forsake the use of ardent spirits, and the whole trade of distilling, selling, and using will cease. The countenance which they give the trader, upholds him in respectability, and enables him to sell to the drunkard. No man would engage in a trade

having none but drunkards to support it; no man could maintain a business who had only drunkards for customers. Again, and again, therefore, I say, let temperate men give the trade no countenance, and at once it is a shattered wreck, on which no wise man would trust a foot, and which will assuredly go to the bottom. Up, then, and be doing, men of patriotism —men of piety; a tide of intemperance, rising every hour, is hurrying all moral and religious institutions before it; up and be doing now, or weep when all is over, on the closed grave of your country's glory. This subject is deeply interesting—peculiarly interesting—to Irishmen, and, therefore, though I cannot expect to find all temperate Irishmen prepared to go the full length in plans of reform, I do expect to find many prepared to do much promptly, fearlessly, and perseveringly for the overthrow of intemperance, and the regeneration of our country.—Yours, &c.,

"JOHN EDGAR."

This letter was presented for publication to the managers of two of the local newspapers; but the editor of the *Belfast Guardian* flatly refused to print it, assigning as his reason that he considered the writer demented. The proprietor of the *News-Letter*, a prudent Scotchman, was more accommodating; and it may be found in that journal of the date of the 14th of August, 1829. When another communication on the same subject was sent to the office, the manager betrayed symptoms of uneasiness, but at length con-

sented to insert it, on the condition that it was to be divided into two parts; and that when the first section was published, a week was to intervene before the second made its appearance. There was little reason for such extraordinary caution. The letters were almost immediately copied into other newspapers, and produced all over the country a profound impression. In a postscript to the second part of the second letter, Mr. Edgar was able to announce that one Irish Temperance Society had already been established.

The Rev. George Whitmore Carr had lately met with Mr. Edgar, and had read with intense interest his first communication addressed to the editor of the *Belfast News-Letter*. Mr. Carr had been a minister of the United Church of England and Ireland; but, from conscientious motives, had left the Establishment, and turned Dissenter. He was a native of New Ross; he now acted as agent for the proprietor of that town; and he was extensively and deservedly popular. He was a ready and able speaker, and somewhat impulsive in his movements. When convinced that he was in the way of his duty, prudential considerations were at once shoved aside; and every cause in which he enlisted was supported by him with equal promptitude and energy. He is said to have been the founder of the first Bible Society established in any provincial town in Ireland;* and in New Ross he had been the zealous patron of industrial institutions, hospitals, and public schools. Though at this time rather advanced

* The New Ross Bible Society was founded in 1804.

in life, he entered with his wonted enthusiasm into the temperance agitation. Impressed by the letter of Professor Edgar, and by a conversation with its author, he resolved, as soon as he returned to his residence in County Wexford, to carry his friend's suggestions into practical operation. The New Ross Temperance Society was the first institute of the kind formed in the Old World; and from the very beginning was influentially supported. In a letter to his Belfast correspondent—dated New Ross, December 4th, 1829—Mr. Carr says:—"At the time you made me acquainted with the existence and nature of Temperance Societies, I was convinced that such were peculiarly suited to Ireland. * * * On the 20th of August last, within a few hours after my return from the north, the New Ross Temperance Society was established at a full meeting held in the Quakers' or Friends' Meeting-House. On this occasion I submitted an account of the American Temperance Society and the fundamental rules with which you furnished me—also your first appeal on the subject. * * * We have been joined by four private gentlemen, five respectable merchants, two medical gentlemen, one attorney, and eighteen tradesmen and farmers. But the number formally united in the Society gives an inadequate idea of its influence. * * * Very many individuals act on our principle, though not members. We can reckon with much confidence on three or four decidedly recovered from nearly the very worst stage of drunkenness. Our shambles, our quays, and so forth,

all bear witness to the wonderful change. So fully is this known and acknowledged that, amongst several other encouraging communications, we had this week a proposal from the manager of a manufactory in Waterford offering to subscribe ten guineas to our fund, or to any charitable institution we please, if we introduce the temperance principles into his establishment." New Ross had been notorious for its drunkenness and profligacy; but, in a short time, its streets, before wofully disturbed by midnight brawls, became comparatively quiet and orderly.

Mr. Carr did not stop here. Knowing that the support of the Roman Catholic clergy would give an immense impetus to the cause, he wrote to the celebrated Dr. Doyle, Roman Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin—with whom he had been previously acquainted—inviting his attention to the claims of Temperance Societies. That prelate was perhaps the most favourable sample of a Romish dignitary Ireland has ever seen. Well acquainted with the writings of Augustine, he firmly grasped some of the great doctrines of the New Testament. It is deeply to be regretted that a man who possessed so many qualities of sterling excellence, was withal kept in miserable bondage by the peculiarities of his system. Throughout life, he knew little of that strong consolation which the gospel is fitted to impart,* and which a higher de-

* The following is an extract from the last letter he wrote in his illness:—"As the mercy of God is above all His works, and as He hates nothing of what He has made, *may we not hope that He is chastening my offences be-*

gree of spiritual illumination would have enabled him to realise. Straightforward, generous, and magnanimous, he scorned to look on everything pertaining to Protestantism through the dark spectacles of bigotry. Endowed with true genius, extensive erudition, and commanding eloquence, he zealously employed his exalted gifts in endeavouring to promote the moral improvement of his countrymen. He believed that the temperance movement was fitted to benefit society; and, though not very sanguine as to its success, at once gave it his sanction. In a letter to Mr. Carr, dated Carlow, December 20th, 1829, he says that he is willing to "co-operate with any Temperance Society." After stating that such an institute will be opposed by "all the drunkards, all the publicans, all the grocers who retail whisky, all the brewers, all the distillers, with the swabs, and wits, and idlers who appertain to them," and after suggesting that the impost on whisky must be increased by the Chancellor of the Exchequer before the temperance movement could make much progress, he adds:—"Withal even a small good is worth seeking after, and those engaged in procuring it, even though they be not successful, will not lose their reward. If the societies of tradesmen, which are found in almost every town, could be induced to adopt as a

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fore He calls me to judgment—a judgment which no man can stand."—*Life*, by William John Fitzpatrick, J.P., vol. ii. p. 490. The doctrine of a free justification unfolds very different views to the believer. Paul could say—"There is now *no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus."—Rom. viii. 1. And again—"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—Cor. iv. 17.

rule or regulation abstinence from ardent spirits, or even a temperate use of it, if such be possible, much good would result to themselves therefrom." In a letter, dated March 8th, 1830, addressed to the Secretary of the Dublin Temperance Society—then recently organized—he expressed himself still more unequivocally. "Be pleased," said he, "to offer for me to the gentlemen forming the committee my best thanks [for a copy of some pamphlets transmitted to him], and to accept for yourself, not my acknowledgments only of the many marks of your attention which I have received, but what you seem to set some value upon, the expression of my full and entire approval of the good work you are promoting, and of my earnest hope that it may proceed and prosper to the utmost extent of your desires."

Mr. Edgar was soon convinced that, if success was to be expected, he must "reason of temperance" from the pulpit; but, in the earlier stages of the movement, he found it difficult to obtain an opportunity of addressing a large audience on the subject on the Lord's Day. Such was the state of society that no little courage and decision were required to confront the opposition which the advocacy of the principle was sure to awaken. His own meeting-house could accommodate only a small congregation; and yet, when he sought the use of a larger edifice, that he might preach a temperance sermon, he at first met with a refusal. The Independents declined to lend their chapel in Donegall Street for such a purpose. The

Methodists, with considerable reluctance, consented to give him the use of their meeting house in Donegall Square. The first discourse delivered in Ulster in support of the temperance cause, and announced by public advertisement, was delivered there in the month of October, 1829. The result was decidedly encouraging. "On Sunday evening last, at five o'clock," says a contemporary newspaper report, "the Rev. John Edgar delivered an impressive discourse on Temperance in the Methodists' Chapel, Donegall Square. The evening was exceedingly unfavourable, yet the house was so crowded as to render it impossible for a large portion of the audience to find accommodation. The fact of itself serves to show the interest which the subject has created." "We shall not," continues the reporter, "attempt an outline of Mr. Edgar's discourse; it is sufficient to say that it was a most energetic appeal to all the feelings of duty, interest, and religion, by which the human mind can be actuated, in regard to the evils of intemperance. If we might judge by the attention that was universally manifested, we would conclude that the power of the preacher's appeal was extensively felt, whether it be in the end practically successful or not." *

After the appearance of the second article on Temperance, Mr. Edgar continued to address the public through the medium of the *Belfast News-Letter*. The proprietor by this time had discovered that the dis-

* The Rev. James Morgan preached the second of these temperance sermons.

cussion was awakening much interest, and that the insertion of such communications in his paper was not at all likely to diminish its circulation. Other journals —the *Belfast Guardian* included—now opened their columns to his correspondence. The earlier letters were immediately republished; and twelve thousand copies, printed in the form of tracts, were gratuitously distributed. No less than three large editions soon issued from the press. These letters, decked out in flashy paper covers, and hawked about the country by agents appointed for the purpose, were read with avidity by all classes.

A number of individuals in the commercial capital of the north had already discontinued the use of ardent spirits; and on the 24th of September, 1829, a select meeting, convened by private circular in the Belfast Religious Tract Depository in Waring Street, laid the foundation of the Ulster Temperance Society. The first three names subscribed to the pledge were James Morgan, Thomas Hincks, and John Edgar. Other ministers soon appended their signatures — among whom may be mentioned the Rev. Thomas Houston of Knockbracken, the Rev. Hugh Hunter, and the Rev. M. Tobias.

Steam had long before brought Belfast and Scotland into daily correspondence; and the report of the movement in the metropolis of Ulster immediately crossed the channel. John Dunlop, Esq. of Greenock, at once became an advocate of the cause, and engaged zealously in its promotion. Patrick Adair

Black, Esq., William Collins, Esq., Dr. Ritchie, and other gentlemen in Glasgow, willingly co-operated. Fifteen hundred copies of the communications addressed to the editor of the *Belfast News-Letter* were sent to Scotland : Mr. Edgar himself visited the friends of the movement in that country as early as the month of September, 1829; and explained to a meeting held in Glasgow the principles and objects of temperance societies. An edition of the sermons on temperance by Dr. Lyman Beecher of America, with an introductory essay by Professor Edgar, was undertaken by an Edinburgh publisher; and a Belfast edition of three thousand copies soon afterwards appeared. The movement quickly extended into England, and there too the agency of the press was extensively called into requisition. The first English Temperance Society was established at Bradford by Henry Forbes, Esq. Soon after the formation of a society at Glasgow, this gentleman attended one of the meetings of its committee, and subscribed the constitution. On his return home, Mr. Forbes devoted himself to the cause; and, with a perseverance which neither apathy nor ridicule could disturb, laboured to promote its extension in south Britain. Two impressions of "Beecher's Sermons," with Professor Edgar's Introductory Essay, were issued by the Bradford Society. From Bradford the movement quickly extended to Newcastle, Durham, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, York, London, Bristol, and other parts of England.

The success of the temperance movement far ex-

ceeded Mr. Edgar's expectations; and he was led, step by step, into a position which he had not anticipated. Good men had long deplored the ravages of drunkenness; they saw it steadily eating into the very vitals of society: many were prepared to adopt the bold remedy now proposed; and Professor Edgar was at once, by general consent, recognised as the most fitting leader to conduct the agitation. The friends of temperance did not calculate largely on the reclamation of confirmed topers; but they hoped to revolutionise public sentiment by diffusing sound views of the nature and use of ardent spirits; and they reckoned on saving sober men from contagion by pledging them to proper habits. They maintained that though distilled spirit, as a medicine prescribed by the physician, may be beneficial in disease, its constant use, even in small quantities, is injurious to men in health; and that were the temperate to combine and abstain from it altogether, drunkenness would be eventually annihilated. They proceeded on the principle that "union is strength." Individuals acting apart may accomplish little; but, acting together, they may eventually change the tone of society. By meetings, speeches, and other demonstrations, they give mutual encouragement, strengthen each other's hands, awaken general attention, and utter a testimony which tells against prevalent abuses. Before the end of the year 1829, Professor Edgar was able to report that the cause was extending rapidly in Ireland, and that from different parts of Scotland and England he had very cheering

intelligence. Twenty-five societies, containing eight hundred members, had been established in four months. "In one large district," said he, "ardent spirits have been banished from wakes and funerals. I know of more than a dozen session-houses from which they have been expelled; and in a town where there is a Temperance Society containing one hundred and forty members, two keepers of public-houses have resigned, while another individual in a different quarter has not only renounced the trade in ardent spirits, but has become a member of a Temperance Society. Forty clergymen of different religious denominations are either members or avowed friends of Temperance Societies; and Roman Catholics and Protestants are cordially uniting in promoting a cause which is free from party politics, and which seeks the good of ALL."*

* Letter to the editor of the *Monitor*, dated January 1st, 1830.

CHAPTER III.

THE QUAKERS SUPPORT THE TEMPERANCE CAUSE — JOHN CAPPER, ESQ.—PREJUDICES IN FAVOUR OF WHISKY—TESTIMONY OF EMINENT PHYSICIANS—PROFESSOR EDGAR'S JOURNEYS AND CORRESPONDENCE—HIS EARLY RISING—TEMPERANCE MEETINGS IN DUBLIN, NEWRY, GREENOCK, GLASGOW, BRADFORD, MANCHESTER, AND LONDON — THE KILBIRNIE PLACARD — PROFESSOR EDGAR'S SPEECHES, PUBLICATIONS, AND COADJUTORS—REV. DR. MORGAN—REV. THOMAS HINCKS — REV. DR. HOUSTON — REV. M. TOBIAS — REV. WALTER MOFFAT—SAMUEL THOMPSON, ESQ.—SIR R. BATESON—JOHN CROMIE, ESQ.—SIR F. W. MACNAGHTEN—LORD FARNHAM—DRINKING USAGES—CHURCH DISCIPLINE AMONG THE SECEDERS—GOOD FRUITS OF THE MOVEMENT.

N his advocacy of the temperance movement, Mr. Edgar, from the first, was warmly encouraged by members of the Society of Friends. The change which has passed over the Quakers, since the days of George Fox, is one of the most remarkable in the history of sectarianism. The wild fanaticism of their founder is gone; their readiness to promote every measure of practical improvement is proverbial; they exhibit little zeal for proselytism; and they are everywhere known as a quiet, prudent, and wealthy brotherhood. The obvious utility of the scheme propounded by John Edgar,

commended itself to their support; and both in Great Britain and Ireland they were among his earliest, steadiest, and most valuable auxiliaries. The first Temperance Society in Europe was formed in one of their meeting-houses; and the Temperance Society of the Irish capital met, for the first time, in their place of worship in Eustace Street. Dr. Joshua Harvey of Dublin, a highly respectable medical practitioner belonging to their community, was one of Mr. Edgar's most indefatigable assistants, and acted as Secretary of the Hibernian Temperance Society. John Capper, Esq. of Clapton, Secretary of the British and Foreign Temperance Society, was originally connected with the same denomination. Mr. Capper greatly respected Professor Edgar; they were frequently in each other's company, and long maintained an epistolary correspondence. This intercourse tended to enlarge Mr. Capper's views; and, a few years after they became acquainted, he relinquished the peculiarities of Quakerism, and became an English Congregationalist. In the autumn of 1836, he and his household were baptised by the late Dr. John Pye Smith of Homerton, author of the "Scripture Testimony to the Messiah," and other well-known publications. The influence exercised by Professor Edgar over this family was a singular recognition of his own excellence; for a stranger might have travelled over broad England without discovering many homes exhibiting a higher combination of personal refinement, cultivated talent, and true piety.

The grand barrier in the way of the Temperance Reformation was the strong public opinion in favour of what was called the moderate use of ardent spirits. Cases could be quoted in which persons, who had long used a certain portion of the liquor daily, attained a good old age; and many were slow to believe that an article which, in such instances, had apparently done no harm, could be essentially deleterious. This reasoning, though plausible, was not very conclusive; for individuals have been long exposed to influences confessedly prejudicial to health, and yet, owing to some peculiarity of constitution, or some other circumstance, have arrived at longevity. Medical testimony was, however, required to counteract the popular impression. Dr. Cheyne, an eminent physician of Dublin, was one of the first members of his profession to step forward and state his convictions. A few days after the movement was inaugurated in Belfast, he entered into correspondence with Mr. Edgar, and encouraged him to persevere. Dr. W. J. Morgan, another worthy medical practitioner of the Irish capital, did much to advance the cause. Many medical men continued neutral, and not a few joined heartily in the ridicule with which the earliest operations of the Society were greeted; but at length such an array of the highest medical authorities throughout the empire united in attesting the noxious properties of ardent spirits, that ordinary physicians, who did not care to imperil their own reputation, and who might otherwise have been hostile, felt it expedient to be silent. "No person,"

said Sir Astley Cooper, "has a greater hostility to dram-drinking than myself, inasmuch that I never suffer any ardent spirits in my house, thinking them evil spirits; and if the poor could witness the white livers, the dropsies, the shattered nervous systems which I have seen as the consequences of drinking, they would be aware that spirits and poisons are synonymous terms." "The useful purposes to be served by spirituous liquors are so trifling," said Dr. Christison, Professor of Materia Medica in the University of Edinburgh, "contrasted with the immense magnitude and variety of the evils resulting from their habitual abuse by the working classes of this country, that their entire abandonment, as an article of diet, is earnestly to be desired." Hundreds of physicians and surgeons in London, including the medical officers of fifty-six of its public institutions, and the lecturers of its fourteen medical schools, in which young men are educated for the profession, signed a declaration bearing still stronger testimony. "We declare our conviction," said they, "that distilled spirit is not only unnecessary, but injurious to persons in health; that it contains no nutritive quality; that its daily use is a strong temptation to drunkenness, occasioning many severe diseases and rendering others difficult of cure; leading to poverty, misery, and death; and that its entire disuse, except for purposes strictly medicinal, would powerfully contribute to the health, morality, and comfort of the community."

Professor Edgar's earlier journeys for the advance-

ment of the temperance cause were undertaken at his own expense; and, as he often travelled far from home, the outlay was a grave deduction from a very moderate income. During the first year of the movement, his expenditure in this way was upwards of £100. The amount of correspondence to which he was committed by the agitation of the question involved another serious inroad on his purse. Regarded everywhere as the father of Irish and British Temperance Societies, he was obliged, with his own hand, to answer the letters which poured in upon him from all parts of the United Kingdom; and, as the circle of his fame widened, individuals interested in the subject in Canada, the United States, and even in the East Indies, sought his epistolary acquaintance. He could reckon upwards of one hundred and sixty temperance correspondents; and he was expected, not only to furnish them with information, but likewise to supply the best solution in his power of the various difficulties they suggested. Some Parliamentary friends — and Alderman Copeland of London among the rest — kindly furnished him with franks; but the aid given in this way could be only partial; and, in those days of high postage, the expenditure to which he was exposed was very considerable.* During all this time he was obliged to attend to his official engagements as minister of Alfred Place congregation, and as Professor

* At length, on the payment of one penny, communications, solely on the business of the Temperance Society, passed through the Post Office as charity letters.

of Theology for the Secession Church. His collegiate session continued barely three months; and, as he had already prepared a large number of lectures, his class duties did not now occupy much time: neither was his private congregational visitation very onerous, as his flock, though increasing, was still small; but he officiated twice every Lord's Day in his own pulpit, conducted a prayer meeting during the week, and preached frequently in outposts in his neighbourhood. Throughout life he was accustomed to rise early; at this period he was often up at four o'clock in the morning; and he thus contrived to overtake a vast amount of work before the arrival of the breakfast hour.

The year 1830 was one of the busiest periods in Professor Edgar's busy career. Early in that year he was in Dublin, where he spoke at the formation of the Hibernian Temperance Society. In March he delivered a powerful address at the first public meeting of the Newry Temperance Society. In the same month he was in Scotland, where he advocated the cause before large audiences in Greenock and Glasgow. Not long afterwards he visited Carrick-on-Shannon and Boyle, and addressed the public through the columns of the *Sligo Journal* and the *Roscommon and Leitrim Gazette*. In June he was present at the first public meeting of the Bradford Temperance Society, where he spoke for upwards of two hours. During the same week he was in Manchester, and addressed a large assembly for nearly three hours. In October of the same year he returned to Manchester, and de-

livered another speech of the same length. His exertions in that part of England produced very beneficial results; and the committees of the Manchester and Salford Temperance Societies presented him with a silver ewer in testimony of their high appreciation of his services. Towards the close of 1830 he appeared in Larne, Ballymena, and other towns of Ulster, to plead the cause, and inaugurate associations. In June, 1831, he addressed a great meeting in Exeter Hall, at which the British and Foreign Temperance Society was established. Sir T. Webb, Director-General of the Medical Department of the Ordnance, presided. The Bishop of Chester, and the Solicitor-General for Ireland appeared on the platform, and took part in the proceedings. Professor Edgar spoke repeatedly afterwards at the anniversaries of the British and Foreign Temperance Society; and, at various times, attended meetings in York, Leeds, Blackburn, and other towns in England.

When conducting the temperance movement, he acted on the principle of going wherever invited; and he made his arrangements so judiciously, and so economised his time, that he was seldom from home on the Sabbath. His attendance at temperance meetings was much coveted; and the announcement of his presence was sure to attract a crowd. About this time the great measure of Parliamentary Reform absorbed the thoughts of politicians, and the agitation connected with it shook society to its foundations. Like the sea after a storm, the public mind did not go

at once to rest when the social tempest had passed away; and for months after the 9th of June, 1832, when the Royal assent was given to the Act for improving the representation of the people, any allusion to the all-exciting topic evoked attention. The friends of temperance adroitly availed themselves of the popular watchword; their speeches and handbills abounded in allusions to Reformers and Reform; and though Mr. Edgar, at that time, was only thirty-four years of age, some of his Scotch admirers who had never seen him, took it for granted that, because he was a professor of theology, he must be a man of hoary hairs, and made some ludicrous announcements when proclaiming his advent. The following is a copy of one of their placards:—

"REFORMERS, WHETHER MORAL OR POLITICAL; COUNTRYMEN, WHETHER TEMPERATE OR INTEMPERATE.—This information comes to you—viz. that *the eminent and venerable the Rev. John Edgar*, Professor of Divinity, Belfast College, will deliver a lecture on Temperance, in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, on Tuesday evening, the 4th September, and in the Beith Secession Church on the following evening, when, from the subsequent considerations, it is reasonably expected that all within the range of this important call, who wish well to the moral and temporal improvement of their beloved country, will endeavour to give their attendance. Reformers, it is calculated that ardent spirits cost this nation twenty millions ster-

ling annually. Christians, a great proportion of all the crime, vice, misery, infidelity, and premature death in this country, is justly attributed to ardent spirits; and now when our country is groaning in the depth of misery—when the judgments of God are abroad on the earth, because of the wickedness of man—when Temperance Societies are earnestly endeavouring to suppress this wickedness, and when the First Advocate of Temperance Societies in the British Empire has condescended to come so far to address you on the subject—come forward, we beseech you, and lend your aid to the moral and political reformation of our beloved country.—Doors open at half-past six; the President will take the chair at seven o'clock, P.M.

"Kilbirnie, 31st August, 1832."

The first appearance of cholera in the United Kingdom, shortly after the commencement of the temperance movement, created a universal panic. It was well known that drunkards were peculiarly exposed to it; and this fact was not forgotten by Professor Edgar and his friends when urging the necessity of reformation. In the preceding placard the dreaded malady is noticed as a judgment of God abroad upon the earth because of the wickedness of man. In a great variety of other broad-sheets printed about the same time by the Temperance Reformers, the word "CHOLERA" is exhibited in conspicuous characters.

Professor Edgar was now in the full vigour of life, and the sensation he sometimes created in the places

he visited was extraordinary. On his arrival in a strange town his outward man awakened no little curiosity; and his appearance in the streets was in itself an advertisement to the inhabitants that they might expect something remarkable. As he had soon thoroughly mastered his subject in all its bearings, he had no dread of being thrown off his guard by any assailant. On one occasion, at Bradford, he was required to present himself before a large meeting to answer objections; but he passed through this most critical ordeal in a way which elicited universal applause. The temperance question was admirably adapted for the exhibition of his peculiar endowments. He had great quickness of apprehension as well as readiness of expression; and he could turn to good account any little incident which occurred during a meeting. He had much talent for declamation; and he could indulge it freely as he denounced the abominations of drunkenness. He had deep sympathy for human suffering; and as he told the tale of some broken-hearted wife and her starving children, his pathos melted all hearts. He had an inexhaustible supply of humorous anecdotes; and, when discussing the very absurd reasons often given by those who declined to join the Temperance Society, he could ply this species of light artillery with the happiest effect. His wit might not always be very refined, but its impression was irresistible. "I am told," said he once at a temperance meeting, "that the publicans look ugly at me. Never mind, I can look as ugly at them."

He had singular dramatic power; and as he suited the action to the word, and paced the platform to and fro, and nodded his head, and performed all manner of comic evolutions, he convulsed his audience with roars of laughter. Temperance is a sober theme; and yet working men, who had once heard him, flocked again to his meetings as to a place of entertainment. For hours they hung upon his lips as, in turn, he instructed, and amused, and alarmed, and persuaded them. As he closed some of his most effective appeals, the whole multitude, in delight, rose from their seats, and saluted him with repeated rounds of acclamation.

Mr. Edgar availed himself largely of the assistance of the press in carrying on the temperance reformation. From first to last he issued about ninety distinct publications bearing directly on the subject. None of these works, indeed, were bulky; some of them were mere tracts of a few pages; but if all his printed letters, speeches, sermons, essays, and other disquisitions on temperance, were put together, they would fill several portly volumes. Meanwhile he edited the *Belfast Temperance Advocate*—a monthly periodical published in the capital of Ulster with three thousand of a circulation—and for eighteen months he also edited the organ of the British and Foreign Temperance Society published in London. In the report of the committee of the Ulster Temperance Society for 1833, it is stated that it had "circulated, since its commencement, 228,500 publications of all sizes—from the pamphlet of ninety-six pages to the single leaf." With very few

exceptions, all these tracts and pamphlets were written by Professor Edgar. Many of his productions were frequently reprinted. His "Retrospect of Temperance Societies" was reproduced in Dublin and elsewhere; and 13,000 copies of it were put into circulation in Ulster. Many English societies republished his "Temperance Man's Seven Reasons for Drinking no Distilled Spirit." An "Address of the Ulster Temperance Society," which he wrote, had the largest circulation of any tract of the kind published in the Old World. It was reprinted in Leeds, Bath, Glasgow, and London, as well as in America; and 15,000 copies were issued in one edition. Two editions of a series of ten of his smaller tracts consisted each of 40,000 copies. His "Complete View of the Principles and Objects of Temperance Societies"—a tract of forty-four closely-printed duodecimo pages—was republished at Bradford, Bristol, Bath, Manchester, Leeds, York, and London, as well as in Canada and the United States. His tract entitled "Jamie, a true Story" was amazingly popular. It was written at the request of the Duchess of Manchester, who took a deep interest in the cause. It has often been reprinted, and forms one of the series of the publications of the American Tract Society. When reprinted at New York, a single individual purchased 3500 copies.

Mr. Edgar had undertaken a herculean task; but he was sustained by that hidden strength given abundantly to those appointed for great services. The friends who at that time were accustomed to join with

him in religious exercises, often remarked the solemnity and the unction of his prayers. From the outset he was nobly supported by a band of like-minded reformers. The Rev. James Morgan, minister of the Presbyterian Church, Fisherwick Place, Belfast—the first who signed the pledge of the Ulster Temperance Society—was one of his most valued counsellors. As he was the pastor of a very influential congregation, and generally respected for his prudence and sagacity, his name was a tower of strength. Nor did Mr. Morgan himself remain inactive. Though his weighty official engagements did not permit him to go much from home, he contrived in various ways to foster and encourage the temperance agitation. By sermons on the Lord's Day, by addresses at temperance meetings throughout the week, and by articles in the *Orthodox Presbyterian*—a periodical of which he was the editor, and which had very extensive circulation—he gave most effective aid. The Rev. Thomas Hincks, then Curate of Belfast and now Archdeacon of Connor, was another of Mr. Edgar's earliest and most vigorous coadjutors. Mr. Hincks was long one of the secretaries of the Ulster Society. By his addresses from the pulpit and his speeches on the platform, by enlisting not a few of the Episcopal clergy, by corresponding on the subject with the Episcopal gentry, and by going on deputations to London and elsewhere, he rendered important service. The Rev. Thomas Houston, of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Knockbracken, and the Rev. M. Tobias of the Wesleyan Church, Belfast,

also entered cordially into the movement, and contributed much to its extension. But, of none of his clerical brethren was Mr. Edgar wont to speak in terms of warmer affection, than of his young friend the Rev. Walter Moffat, pastor of the Seceding Congregation of Saintfield. In 1831, shortly after he obtained license, the members of the Alfred Place Church were desirous to have him settled as a colleague to their minister, then much occupied with temperance engagements; and, to induce him to enter into the arrangement, Mr. Edgar proposed to resign in his favour the whole of his congregational stipend: but various obstacles presented themselves, and the offer was eventually declined. No wonder that the Professor of Theology coveted the aid of such an assistant. He had been one of his most distinguished students; and his after life fully sustained the promise of his collegiate career. Those who knew that true Presbyterian worthy can be at no loss to understand why Mr. Edgar loved him with a father's tenderness. His handsome person, his well-cultivated mind, his pleasing manners, his deep piety, and his most impressive discourses, will not soon be forgotten in the neighbourhood where he ministered. "His eloquence," says Mr. Edgar, "was of the very highest order. A sermon which he delivered in the Presbyterian Church, Fisherwick Place, Belfast, formed an era in the temperance reformation; it was truly sublime and truly great." * He was cut down by consumption in the spring of 1838 in the 28th year of his

* *Temperance Advocate* for April, 1838, p. 160.

age; and the apostle of temperance, in one of his tracts, has paid a just tribute to his memory. Mr. Moffat, in his will, bequeathed £50 to the Ulster Temperance Society.

Whilst Mr. Edgar was supported, almost from the beginning, by a goodly number of the respectable laity of Belfast—including the late Robert Workman, senr., Esq., and the late John Herdman, Esq.—he was also much cheered by the countenance of some of the worthiest of the gentry and nobility throughout Ulster. Samuel Thompson, Esq. of Muckamore Abbey, happened not to be in Ireland when the movement commenced; but, immediately after his return, he entered into correspondence with its originator; and ever afterwards by his purse, his personal influence, and his attendance at temperance meetings, endeavoured to advance its progress. Sir Robert Bateson, M.P., presided at the first annual meeting of the Ulster Temperance Society in the Exchange Rooms, Belfast. Lady Bateson was one of Professor Edgar's correspondents, and honoured him with her zealous patronage. John Cromie, Esq. of Portstewart, and William Blacker, Esq. of Armagh, likewise gave him their hearty co-operation. Sir Francis Workman Macnaghten, of Roe Park, Newtonlimavady, wrote to him assuring him of his sympathy, and did much in his own neighbourhood to add to the popularity of the temperance meetings. Lord Farnham was so deeply impressed by one of Professor Edgar's publications that he had it reprinted at his own expense. But few individuals in the three king-

doms evinced greater interest in his proceedings than Miss Wedgewood, Camp Hill, near Woore, Stafford. This lady frequently corresponded with him, and repeatedly made large donations to aid the temperance cause.

When Mr. Edgar commenced the temperance reformation, the drinking usages of society had made sad havoc among the members of the Seceding Synod. As they visited their hearers from house to house, they were urged to partake of ardent spirits in the way of hospitality; and too many of them, wanting sufficient decision of character to resist solicitation, had thus acquired a false appetite for grog, and had sunk into habits of inebriety. Conscience told Professor Edgar that, as the advocate of temperance, he could not wink at the drunkenness of his brethren; and, painful though it was, he felt constrained to bring the discipline of the Church to bear on the unhappy offenders. Many a reproach fell on him when engaged in the performance of this stern duty; he was denounced as inquisitorial and unfeeling; he was coaxed and he was threatened; but he was determined to permit no man to be able to tell him that he had suffered a sot to preach to any Seceding congregation. Aided by faithful fellow-presbyters bent on the removal of the scandal, he succeeded in effecting the purgation of the Synod. It is sad to relate that the work was accomplished by the suspension or degradation of no less than the one-seventh of its ministers. Throughout life Professor Edgar exhibited the same fidelity in

maintaining the reputation of Christ's House. He was the terror of the immoral and the unprincipled. They knew well he was one church ruler whom they could neither intimidate nor cajole.

The good fruits of the temperance reformation more and more appeared. The continuance of the agitation involved considerable expense and enormous labour; but society was at length moved throughout all its borders, and a healthier tone of public sentiment was gradually superinduced. Delusions relative to the properties of ardent spirits were dissipated; and in various places drinking usages were discontinued, and the tyranny of evil customs abolished. The laughter which hailed the first operations of Temperance Societies was followed by grave consideration; publicans and their customers became very angry; and, in sundry towns, the consumption of strong drink sensibly diminished. In Belfast twenty-seven firms in the provision trade, with Messrs. John and Thomas Sinclair at their head, and twenty millowners and manufacturers, proclaimed their determination, in a published resolution, "to furnish to their workmen no spirituous liquor as a refreshment, but to substitute, when necessary, some wholesome beverage." Ships ventured to sea without the usual supply of liquor for the sailors; and commercial companies were found willing to insure such vessels at a lower premium. The Duke of Wellington expressed his high approval of the exertions of the advocates of temperance; and directed an order to be issued to the Grenadier Guards, in which they

were strongly urged to abstain from distilled spirits. A respectable merchant belonging to Professor Edgar's own congregation in Belfast set the example of discontinuing the traffic; and Temperance Societies, all over the empire, could soon point to cases here and there in which individuals, from conscientious motives, had ceased to sell the drink of drunkards. There were not wanting instances of distillers who, on the same grounds, abandoned the manufacture. Early in 1833 upwards of one hundred and fifty Temperance Societies, containing 15,000 members, existed in Ulster. At the same time Scotland had three hundred and fifty societies, with 50,000 members; and in 1834 the societies in England and Wales contained 100,000 members. The number of members very partially expressed the influence of these associations; for many acted on the principle who scrupled to sign the pledge. In rural districts, villages, and cities where Temperance Societies had enlisted a considerable proportion of the population, the improvement was marvellous. Within less than a year after the establishment of the Temperance Society in Bradford, the consumption of ardent spirits had decreased one-third. Preston, then containing 20,000 inhabitants, had previously been notorious for its brawls and rioting; but, at two successive assizes after the introduction of the temperance reform, not a single case of crime was registered for trial. Judge Alderson, in an address from the bench, called attention to the fact, and ascribed the change to the influence of the Temperance Society. Cock-

fighting was discontinued; the friends of temperance assembled weekly in a place used formerly as a cock-pit; and at a meeting in Preston, where none but reformed drunkards were permitted to speak, twenty reformed drunkards delivered addresses. On Christmas Day, 1833, the Preston Temperance Society had a grand tea party in the Exchange Rooms. The Recorder of the borough was present at the meeting; the company amounted to about 1200; the tea-kettle was a boiler containing two hundred gallons; and forty reformed drunkards acted as waiters.

Within the sphere of his personal observation, Professor Edgar had many pleasing proofs of the usefulness of his labours. All the students of his own class, as well as many of those belonging to the Synod of Ulster, eventually joined the Temperance Society. He rejoiced to think that, when he was gone, so many ministers animated by his spirit and occupying pulpits throughout his native province, would teach men to live soberly by both precept and example. Once, when coming out of a meeting in Coleraine, a stranger, with tears in his eyes, grasped his hand, exclaiming, "I bless the lips which set me free." This individual had, it appeared, been a slave to strong drink, and had been induced, several years before, by one of his speeches, to join the Temperance Society. He had ever since faithfully kept the pledge. Professor Edgar was much moved by the incident, and sometimes referred to it as among the most precious tokens of encouragement he had ever received. Often did he

hear of the happiness realised by families on the reformation of a drunken parent; and sometimes one of those reclaimed by his addresses or his tracts would enter into correspondence with him, and thank his benefactor in the fulness of his heart. The following is a specimen of such communications:—

"Darlington, Nov. 10th, 1833.

"Rev. Sir,—I have at different times had great pleasure in sending you newspapers in which were letters that I thought would interest you on Temperance Societies; and now I presume to address you by letter. I am induced to think you will excuse this liberty from the deep interest you take in the sacred cause. It must be gratifying to you to be informed that several of my townsmen have been convinced of the necessity of becoming members by reading your invaluable publications. I have put them into the hands of at least one thousand individuals myself. I consider I am bound by every effort in my power to advance the good cause. * * * Your letter to ministers has been especially useful. I have frequently occasion to leave home, but never go without a supply. When I enter a town, I do not wait to inquire—Is your minister favourable to Temperance Societies? but procure his name, and post a copy immediately. Go on. God is blessing your great talent abundantly. I have been reclaimed from the vortex of intemperance through the influence of the Society's publications. Yours "On

the Principles and Objects of Temperance Societies" I esteem above all others.

* * * * *

"My late father, ———, was held in high estimation by all who knew him. But all his sons, unfortunately, had a propensity to spirituous liquors. Four of them have been scattered abroad by intemperance. His brother fell a slave to drunkenness. Two of my nephews have gone to the drunkard's grave. Is not my case almost a miracle in such a family?

"I embraced temperance principles on the 19th of October, 1831, and since that day to this, never have suffered malt liquor, or even wine, to come within my lips, and trust I never shall.—I am, Rev. Sir, yours most respectfully,

"W. T."

On reading a letter like this, well might Professor Edgar thank God and take courage. Over a reclaimed drunkard every good man must rejoice; but a reclaimed drunkard striving with so much zeal to reform others, is a trophy still more glorious.

CHAPTER IV.

JAMES SILK BUCKINGHAM, ESQ., M.P.—APPOINTMENT OF A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON DRUNKENNESS—REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE—MR. HAWES, M.P., AND DANIEL O'CONNELL, M.P.—PUBLICATION OF DIGEST OF PARLIAMENTARY EVIDENCE—GROWING POPULARITY OF THE CAUSE—THE QUEEN BECOMES PATRONESS OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN TEMPERANCE SOCIETY—ORIGIN OF SOIREES—THE DUBLIN FESTIVAL—JUDGE CRAMPTON—MRS. CRAMPTON—PROFESSOR EDGAR'S SPEECH AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ULSTER TEMPERANCE SOCIETY, IN DECEMBER, 1836—DEGREES OF D.D. AND LL.D.

T a very early period in the history of the temperance agitation, the encouragement given to intemperance by the enactments of the legislature had attracted observation; and Bishop Doyle had suggested that the Chancellor of the Exchequer could do more than any other man in the empire to check the progress of drunkenness. Temperance Societies soon occupied such a position in several boroughs that they were an element of importance in the estimation of candidates for Parliamentary honours. James Silk Buckingham, Esq., returned as representative for Sheffield in 1832, had been very much indebted for his success to the exertions of his tempe-

rance supporters. He had been introduced to the Irish temperance apostle by his friend and correspondent, Mr. H. Forbes, of Bradford, the father of the English Temperance Societies; and Professor Edgar had availed himself of his acquaintance to urge on him the importance of making some movement in the great council of the nation with a view to the discouragement of the liquor traffic. In the spring of 1834, the member for Sheffield, acting under the advice of his temperance patrons, gave notice, in his place in the House of Commons, that he intended to move for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the extent, causes, consequences, and cure of drunkenness. Many grave statesmen regarded this announcement as a piece of folly. A deputation from the Ulster Society was appointed to proceed to London to canvass for Parliamentary support to Mr. Buckingham's motion; and when Professor Edgar, who was one of the party, waited on Lord Althorp, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, to request his aid, his Lordship told him that the House of Commons could not be expected to sanction any such proposal. But the result proved that the great Senator had miscalculated. Petitions praying for inquiry, and bearing fifty-seven thousand signatures, were speedily forwarded to the Legislature, and honourable members were solicited by their constituents in numerous letters to vote for the committee. After a brisk debate the motion was carried, in opposition to the Government, by a majority of 64 to 47. Mr. Buckingham, who acted as chairman of the

committee, exerted himself, with much energy, to promote its efficiency. He was well supported by Sir Robert Bateson, Colonel Williams, and other members favourable to the temperance movement. Fifty witnesses were examined, including physicians of the highest reputation, officers of the army and navy, ministers of various denominations, three police magistrates of London, and a commissioner of poor laws. Professor Edgar was interrogated at great length, and his testimony forms about the one-fifth part of the printed evidence. The inquiry elicited a vast amount of valuable information.

As the result of their investigations, the committee informed the House in their report that the vice of intoxication had been for some years past on the decline in the higher and middle ranks of society, but that it had increased in the lower grades of the population. Among the immediate causes of its augmented prevalence they mentioned the greater number and force of the temptations placed in the daily path of the humbler classes by the establishment of additional places at which intoxicating drinks were sold—the number, as calculated from the average of several districts in England, Scotland, and Ireland, being not less than one such place to about every twenty families throughout the United Kingdom. Some of the suggestions offered by the committee have since been embodied in the Statute-book. They proposed to refuse spirit licenses to all but those engaged exclusively in the liquor traffic, and consequently the entire

separation of the sale of spirits from groceries. They recommended the removal of all taxes on knowledge, and the extension of every facility for spreading useful information. They stated, farther, that several witnesses had urged, as ultimate or prospective remedies, the absolute prohibition of all distillation of ardent spirits from grain, the most important part of human food—and the restriction of distillation, from other materials, to the purposes of the arts, manufactures, and medicine—and the confining the wholesale and retail dealing in such articles to chemists, druggists, and dispensaries alone.

The inquiries of the committee did not cross the path of any great political party; but withal they created annoyance and uneasiness in many quarters. Sobriety does not always flourish among Senators; and some honourable members, who indulged rather too freely in the bottle, did not much relish investigations concerning drunkenness. The distillers, a wealthy and influential class of the community, heard with alarm of the prospective remedies. All spirit-dealers throughout the three kingdoms, whether in the wholesale or retail department, detested an inquiry which threatened to consign them to public execration as the corrupters of society. When Mr. Buckingham brought up the report of the Select Committee, the House of Commons presented a very animated appearance. There was great cheering from the Government as well as from the Opposition benches; and a scene was evidently expected. When a motion was made, accord-

ing to the usual form, that the report be printed, Mr. Hawes, M.P. for Lambeth, prompted, it was alleged, by the distillers, signalised himself by the pertinacity of his opposition. He denounced the report as one of the most extraordinary ever made, and declared that the suggested prospective remedies would involve a flagrant violation of private rights, and be ruinous to the interests of his constituents. Daniel O'Connell, who was then in Parliament, and who is said to have been of sober habits, had at one time expressed his willingness to join a temperance society; but neither Mr. Buckingham, nor other parties interested in the success of the inquiry, were favourites with the Irish Liberator: and he amused the House by turning them and their proceedings into ridicule. Mr. Baines, M.P. for Leeds, one of the committee, had observed that, if there was anything preposterous in the report, it must be found in the suggestions of the witnesses; and had closed his speech by stating that he supported *most warmly* the printing of the document. "The honourable member for Leeds," said Mr. O'Connell, "has told us that he recommends most warmly the printing of the report. I hope the House will as coolly reject such a proposition. The honourable gentleman has observed that this report does not express the opinions of the committee, but of the witnesses. The witnesses! Did the committee not understand what they had to do? To be sure they seem to have been a little muddled; and yet the appearance of the honourable member for Leeds indicates that he is a man

who drinks nothing but water—nothing but solid water. This is a report embodying the opinions of the witnesses! If such were their opinions, the committee should have said that, at this period of the moon, these men must be taken care of. If the House permit this report to be printed, it will encourage every drivelling legislator. Oh, yes! we shall have some snail-paced legislator moving for a committee to inquire into the best means of preventing flies from destroying butter or honey." But the oratory of Mr. O'Connell was more entertaining than effective. Col. Williams, Mr. Brotherton, and others, supported Mr. Buckingham; and, on a division, the motion for printing the report was carried by a majority of 63 to 31.

Professor Edgar drew up for publication by the British and Foreign Temperance Society "A Digest of the Evidence Submitted to the Parliamentary Committee." Two thousand copies of this Digest were printed in Belfast, and another edition appeared in London. His own evidence shows how carefully he had studied the subject in its various aspects, and what an amount of minute statistical information he had been able to collect. He states that, in Belfast and the neighbourhood in the year 1831, the decrease in the consumption of spirits amounted to 84,808 gallons; that in 1832 there was an additional decrease of 15,142 gallons, and that in 1833 there was a still farther decrease of 14,118 gallons. In 1833 the whole amount consumed in the parish of Belfast was 129,819 gallons; so that, in three years, the consumption had

fallen off nearly one-half; and the influence of the Temperance Society was the only reason which could be assigned for the diminution.

About this time Professor Edgar was strongly solicited to remove to London, and to devote himself entirely to the promotion of the temperance cause. The committee of the British and Foreign Temperance Society offered him any sum he chose to name as a suitable remuneration for his services. But he did not feel at liberty to embrace the overture.

Though the labours of the Parliamentary Committee led to no immediate action on the part of Government, they diffused light, stimulated discussion, and supplied overwhelming proof of the gigantic magnitude of the evils of drunkenness. Temperance associations continued to flourish; and, a few years after its establishment, the list of the officials of the British and Foreign Temperance Society contained the names of nine bishops and as many temporal lords. A yet higher distinction awaited the association. In reply to an address presented on its behalf by the Bishop of London, the President of the Society, the following gracious communication was received by his Lordship from the Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department:—

"Whitehall, December 23, 1837.

"My Lord,—I have had the honour to lay before the Queen the loyal and dutiful address of 'The British and Foreign Temperance Society,' on the occasion

of Her Majesty's accession to the throne, which was very graciously received by Her Majesty.

"And I have the satisfaction to inform your Lordship that Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to express her consent to be the Patroness of this Society.

"The copy of the Society's publications, which accompanied the address, has been forwarded to Her Majesty's librarian. — I have the honour to be, my Lord, your Lordship's very obedient servant,

(Signed) "J. RUSSELL.

"The Lord Bishop of London."

Temperance Societies introduced into Ireland those public tea parties, familiarly known as soirees, which have since been so popular. Strong drink was often represented as the very soul of sociality; and many were disposed to think that, were it removed from the domestic board, there would be an end to all cheerfulness and good fellowship. The temperance soirees were intended to counteract these impressions, and to illustrate the excellence of tea as supplying "the cup which cheers but not inebriates." On the 27th of October, 1836, a grand temperance soiree was held in Dublin, in the Rotundo. The tickets issued were necessarily limited to 1000, as no more guests could possibly be accommodated; but, such was the anxiety to join in the celebration, that upwards of 2000 applicants were disappointed. By far the larger portion of those who gained admission were of the higher and middle classes, though a considerable number of

tradesmen and artizans were present. The Right Honourable Lord Cloncurry, the Lord Mayor, the Lady Mayoress, Sir Henry Meredyth, Bart., Lady Meredyth, and many other notabilities, were present. The Honourable Judge Crampton, President of the Hibernian Society, occupied the chair. Well was he entitled to so prominent a position. Shortly after the commencement of the movement he enlisted in the cause, and ever since he had been its most zealous and consistent advocate. In 1830, when practising at the bar, he appeared at the first annual meeting of the Ulster Temperance Society; and, in a most effective speech of two hours in length, had done much to give stability to the young institution. In 1831, when Solicitor-General for Ireland, he attended the first annual meeting of the British and Foreign Temperance Society in Exeter Hall, along with his friend Professor Edgar, and explained with admirable tact and skill the principles of the temperance reformation. In the following year he was again present at the anniversary of the same Society, to give it the sanction of his character and position. He had, meanwhile, been elevated to the Bench, and at this great Dublin festival he delivered a singularly able and interesting address. He had been on terms of intimacy with Professor Edgar for years; he kept up a correspondence with him ever afterwards; and his letters, many of which are preserved, attest how much he loved and honoured the Irish temperance apostle. Mrs. Crampton was a kindred spirit; she also corresponded with Professor

Edgar, and thus discussed with him many of the weightier matters of personal religion. Her extant letters to him reveal a very lovely character—amiable, and intellectual, and adorned with the beauty of holiness.*

By special invitation Professor Edgar attended the Dublin demonstration, and made a speech. He could not but be filled with exultation as he looked round on that brilliant throng. Seven years before he had commenced the temperance agitation in a provincial town; and he had long laboured in the face of derision and of obloquy; and now, in the capital of the country, and in one of the noblest of its public halls, he saw the *elite* of the population gathered to proclaim the triumphs of the cause, and to join in mutual congratulations. The occasion reminded him of incidents which had occurred in the very place where the festival was now celebrated. "Seven years ago," said he, "I had the honour of being hissed in this room: one hero bawled out that he would complain of me to my bishop for bringing illustrations of spirit-drinking hospitality from the pulpit. Now, thanks to Providence, I live to proclaim before this great and interesting assembly that that tyranny is broken, and that the pulpit is free. Intemperance, as a prevailing vice among the clergymen of Ulster, is now no more." In language of the utmost earnestness he exhorted all his auditors to join the temperance standard. "Wife of

* This excellent lady died in 1843. Dr. Edgar's second daughter (Mrs Sinclair) was named after her, Sidney.

the brutal drunkard!" he exclaimed, "we are here to-night for your rescue: children of the drunken sot! servants of the tyrannical drunken master! slaves of tyrannical drunken custom! your deliverers are before you. Though our country is ground by a worse slavery than Africa ever knew, yet there burns on the altar of liberty an inextinguishable fire, and before and around us there is a band of heroes, freemen themselves and the friends of freedom, who, at their country's altar, have sworn eternal emnity to their country's foe. And they will never sheath the sword of the Spirit which, in God's name, they have drawn, until the chains be broken from the last drunken slave, and until, on the grave of the last drunkard, the flag of temperance and sobriety waves in triumph." His address, which was upwards of an hour in length, fully sustained his reputation as an amusing, instructive, and able speaker; and throughout was cheered enthusiastically.

In December, 1836, the Ulster Temperance Society held its annual meeting in the Presbyterian Church, Fisherwick Place, Belfast. Charles Thomson, Esq., a worthy elder of that congregation, filled the chair. The assembly, which was numerous and respectable, was addressed by the Rev. James Morgan, the Rev. Walter Moffat, and others. Mr. Moffat was already suffering from the insidious attacks of the disease which brought him to the grave; and his appearance at the meeting inspired his friends with painful apprehensions. Professor Edgar, who had usually been a

speaker on such occasions, sat among the auditory, and seemed indisposed to take up any more prominent position; but, at an advanced period of the evening, the Rev. Thomas Hincks, his brother secretary, rose and protested publicly against his being silent. "We shall all feel regret," said he, "if we do not hear him. His voice has often cheered us when we were almost without hope; and now, after we have achieved such success, he who has planned the campaign should not be without taking some share in the business of this evening. It is certainly late (half-past ten o'clock), but I am convinced his appearance is expected by all." Mr. Hincks had not miscalculated. Professor Edgar, after some hesitation, rose from his seat, and mounting the platform, delivered a speech which electrified the auditory. No apology is required for giving at length this remarkable address. Standing up, amid loud cheers, before the assembled multitude, he thus proceeded :—

"What must be, must be. It is some comfort, when thus compelled to speak, that I have such an audience to address. The friends of the Bible are here, who have seen pile upon pile in the pawnbroker's window, of copies of the word of God—the money raised on them long since spent on whisky. The friends of the poor are here, who have often found that the clothing which they gave in the morning was pawned and swallowed in whisky before night. They have visited our hospitals; they have shuddered as they traversed the long corridors of our

lunatic asylums; they have seen pallid faces of disease and wretchedness through the gratings of our jails; they have turned instinctively away as the drop fell with the condemned murderer; and they are here to-night to testify their belief, that from the distiller's worm there gushes forth continually a fiery stream of poverty, disease, and crime. The friends of religion are here, who have wept over the drunkard's family of ignorant, naked children, and who have wished that their heads were waters, and their eyes a fountain of tears, that they might weep day and night over the moral waste which the lava flood of distilled spirit leaves wherever it travels. All before me have surely come hither under a deep conviction of the necessity of some great effort to save our unhappy country from ruin, and resolved, I trust, to give a fair trial to any feasible plan of reformation. This is no time for long, cool deliberation; the Mammoth comes, the foe, the monster!—fourteen million gallons of liquid death are flooding our country. Parents are training their children to drunkenness—spirit-sellers are devouring widows' houses, and taking a pledge of the fatherless —the robber gang are laying their plans around the spirit-seller's table in the dark, suspicious back lane—the murderer is waking up his courage and hammering his flint over his solitary glass—the flood of misery rolls on—the flood of crime rolls on—the flood of death rolls on—on to the burning lake. Stop, poor drunkard! oh stop! even on the precipice's brink—these men and women who tempted you so long, and

brought you to the verge of ruin, remember now that you are their brother—they invite you into their society —they throw over you the shield of their protection. Their sympathy and love, which slept so long, are broad awake now, and each one among them is ready to receive you as the affectionate father receives his returning prodigal, when, with an overflowing heart, he cries 'It is meet that we should make merry and be glad; for this, my son, was dead and is alive again —he was lost and is found!'

"It is delightful even to suppose that such a spirit pervades this meeting—it is the very gate of heaven, where such a spirit of pure benevolence reigns as beats in the warm heart, and flows through all the veins of the temperance society. And yet, must there be, even here, a solitary black cloud passing over the brightness of the scene? Must we remember, amid all the triumphs of the past, and bright anticipations of the future, that by this great temperance reformation we are bringing ruin on every twentieth family throughout the community? It has gone forth to all the world, on the authority of a Committee of the British House of Commons, that every twentieth family throughout the empire is engaged in the sale of intoxicating liquor; and what the chief intoxicating liquor in Ireland is, her blood-stained history, alas, too plainly tells. Must all these, then, be sacrificed to the public good? Distillers and spirit-sellers, I bear you no grudge. You have done me maliciously no wrong, and I have no wish to say a word which would

unnecessarily wound your feelings. Why should I? You have enough to bear without even the weight of one of my fingers being laid on your heavy load. Spirit-seller's wife, there was a time once, by your father's fireside, when your young warm notes rose high above the tremulous voice of your venerable father, as his happy family joined in praise to their common God; but that time is gone now—gone for ever! Spirit-seller's daughter, there are all round you pure and peaceful family circles, far from loathsome lewdness and blasphemous profanity, and far, too, from the gloating eye of the base seducer—but, alas, these secure retreats of innocence and virtue are not for you! Spirit-seller's little children, how can I look forward to the fatal consequences of all this bad example—of all these violated Sabbaths—of all this fiery temptation on your pliant minds? I will not lift from before your eyes the curtain which hides the future. Evil comes soon enough, when it comes at all. As yet you are safe—oh, may a merciful Providence turn away far from you the fire-shower of ruin, which so often left the spirit trade as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. I bear no grudge to spirit-dealers, but I must tell them the truth. From my heart I pity them, and I would gladly rescue them from their present misery—but I pity their victims more. Did they only wring from their wretched victim his last farthing—did they only send him forth homeless and naked on the cold world, this could be borne—his character is yet safe—his moral

principle is yet fresh and strong—and even though a calumniating world should blacken his fair fame while he lives, and profane his ashes when he is gone, yet his cause can be committed to the just Judge, to bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noonday—but, alas, for the spirit-seller's victim! There was a day when he was strong as the mountain cataract; he is the wreck of humanity now—I remember when he was the idol of the social circle, and when over every object which he touched he shed the splendour of his bright and cultivated mind—he is a drivelling idiot now—fortune gone—constitution gone—truth and integrity gone—shall I go further? It is not for me to open the gates of the eternal prison! It is not for you to look on the spirit-seller's victims in the place where the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night! We have no right and no disposition to judge the distiller or the spirit-seller; but the whole system of spirit-making, spirit-selling, and spirit-drinking, as an ordinary beverage, we denounce as a curse of God, and assuredly it shall be overthrown. Whoever be for it, He who overthrew Sodom is against it, and His red right hand is already made bare for its destruction. It is still high in prosperity and pride; but the day of its triumphing is short; the angel of death has already spread his wings on the blast, and he comes on a message of vengeance from Him who commanded His prophet to proclaim against the devoted Babylon. 'I will

rise up against them, saith the Lord of Hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord—I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water, and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of Hosts.'

"Let me not be misunderstood while I thus talk of the destruction of a system—there will be, it is true, an immense change, but no such change as takes place when kingdoms fall by the power of the sword: ours are bloodless victories, our weapon is the truth in love, and when the whole present system of temptation shall have been overturned, and the present empire of death utterly destroyed, spirit-sellers shall themselves implore blessings on the heads of the temperate as their best friends and the friends of mankind! Before a single charge is preferred against temperance societies as being actuated by hostility to the persons of publicans, let there be a solemn pause—let all who would rightly judge, dwell on such melancholy facts as those related in the tract, entitled 'The Seventeen Houses,' containing the history of seventeen houses, composing one side of a street in a village of the county Down, or, in No. 10 in our present series of small tracts, containing the history for three years of the public-houses along an English mile of road in the county Antrim, and then, and not till then, let us be charged as the personal enemies of publicans, when a contradiction can be given to the statement of the report this evening, that

the ravages committed by distilled spirit among publicans and their families alone, can find no parallel in the ravages of famine, or pestilence, or the sword. Surely, if spirituous liquor be good and wholesome, we shall find some specimens of its good fruits among those engaged in the spirit trade. If there be one drop more nutritious and grateful than another, it will be reserved for their own palates—if there be a mode of using it without fear of evil consequences, they will know it. Where are these good fruits? Spirit-seller, produce them! Are they painted on that bloated face—does that palsied hand make signs of their number and excellence—is that crape on the spirit-seller's hat, which he wears for his wife who died drunk, a trophy of the triumphs of the bottle? Speak truth for once, lying tomb-stone, and tell the melancholy tale of her whose dust you cover! She was an innocent and lovely creature once, and because she was lovely, her brutal father placed her behind the counter, beside the window. Poor thoughtless thing, little did she think, when her mother decked her out on the market morning, that it was for the slaughter —ah, little did she think, when her father bid her be gay, that her smile was to catch the lewd eye of the adulterer. She believed the seducer's tale, and with a light step she left her father's door. But her destroyer knew too well the powers of the tempting dram, which her own fair hand had so often reached across her father's counter. She drank a little, and only a little, but it was in an evil hour. That hour of

crime and madness passed, and the next found her a vile, and ruined, and deserted thing, miserable beyond expression herself, and sent forth as a spirit from the pit of torment, to inflict pollution, and disease, and wretchedness, and death, as a terrible retribution for the wrongs which she herself had endured. One stormy morning, after a stormier night, as her father opened the door to receive his customers for their early drams, a female form, all beaten and abused, fell in upon him — it was his daughter's corpse! At her funeral there were many eyes streaming with tears, but her father's were not, for her father was drunk—drunk at the funeral of his prostitute daughter!

"Here the curtain is drawn. Oh, is it not well for us that our eyes cannot see into the fiery lake, that our ears cannot hear the weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth in the place of the lost! How could we live at all were those dread realities of the other world fully revealed to us, were the light of heaven to shine down upon the fruits of the spirit trade in the pit of despair—or rather, shall I say, could we live an hour without rising up in an indignant and frenzied mass to sweep such a vile abomination, such a cruel and exterminating plague, from the face of the world for ever? Should so just a retribution be warded off for a moment by a consideration of any advantage conferred by the spirit trade even on the distiller or spirit-seller? 'Who is that drivelling idiot?' said a friend of mine lately to his neighbour.

'Why, have you forgotten your old school-fellow, the fine, athletic, fearless leader of all his playmates? But what cannot the bottle do?' Yes, in truth, he was once a lovely boy, and he grew up to be a fine young man; he is an idiot now. His father was respectable, and rich, in the linen trade, but he added the spirit trade to it, and his sorrows began. True, he himself escaped out of life with the character of a sober man—and he left property to his family, but he left a canker worm, too, which ate it all away. His wife continued the spirit trade and died of drunkenness—her eldest son became an idiot, as did also her daughter, beneath the power of strong drink, and her other son is a raging frantic drunkard. If disembodied spirits know what passes here, what think you is the father's opinion of the spirit trade now? Is he prepared to put pounds, shillings, and pence in the scale against immortal souls, and say—my wife, it is true, was killed by the spirit trade, and laid in a drunkard's grave, but it has made me rich; spirituous liquor has, I acknowledge, made my daughter and one son idiots, and the other a drunken maniac, but then it gained for me five hundred pounds! Your hearts sicken at the satanic calculation, and I pursue it no farther. But why, in such a meeting as the present, wake up all these horrors for the distiller and spirit-seller. They are not for the distiller and spirit-seller only. Christian friends, male and female, moderate drinkers of every class, they are for you, chiefly for you—you, and not penniless drunkards,

support the spirit trade — you, and not reprobate drunkards, give respectability to the spirit trade— the distiller and spirit-seller are merely your servants in manufacturing drunkards and in furnishing victims for the alms-house, and asylum, the gallows, and the grave—you are the masters and mistresses in the school of drunkenness, and whatever power, falsehoods, respecting the supposed excellencies of spirituous liquor, and drunken customs, encouraging the general use of spirituous liquor, may have, they derive it all from you. You give drunken falsehoods currency —you give drunken customs despotic power—under your patronage lives and flourishes the wholesale curse of our country; and yet that curse shall be soon no more—the mandate for its destruction has gone forth from the eternal throne, and with no prophetic eye I look away from the present glorious scene, and see its judgment coming. God grant that before the eye that is open now, has closed in death, the day may come when an emancipated world shall rejoice in liberty, and when spirit-sellers themselves shall look on the members of temperance societies as the benefactors of the human race, dispensing blessings on the right and on the left, to the utmost confines of the world, and leaving behind them an inheritance of good, extending away onward and around till the sounding of the last trump, and onward and onward yet through the ceaseless round of a blessed and glorious eternity!"

This appeal was not in vain. Such an unexpected

burst of eloquence astonished and impressed all. Before the meeting separated, a goodly number came forward and joined the Society.

Ireland had long been distracted by party feuds; but the Temperance Society presented common ground on which persons of all denominations could peacefully assemble. The report of the Ulster Society for 1837 contains an account of a great temperance meeting held shortly before at Clones, County Monaghan, where the tendency of the movement to promote a better state of social feeling was happily illustrated. "W. Forster, Esq., J.P., who acted as chairman, and whose property was in the neighbourhood, had on his estate a friendly society, the meetings of which he conducted on temperance principles, the large mugs for the use of the members, which formerly contained punch, being now filled with tea. Of this society, with other tenants of Mr. Forster, an immense procession was formed, with a flag flying over it, inscribed UNION AND TEMPERANCE, and music playing gloriously '*Jenny put the kettle on*,' going into town, and '*Paddy's farewell to Whisky*,' coming out. The motto on the flag was fully verified in the procession; for though the 12th of July was only a few days past, not only was the procession composed of about equal parts of Roman Catholics and Protestants, but everywhere throughout it was to be seen a Roman Catholic female leaning on the arm of a red-hot Orangeman. When this grand procession with their flag of unity and temperance marched to the peaceful music of the bagpipe,

fife, and drum round the Market Square of Clones, all town and country seemed assembled in one wondering joyous mass."

In 1837 the members of the Temperance Society in England alone amounted to 220,000. In St. Mary's, one of the Scilly Islands, the third part of the whole population had signed the pledge. The movement had extended to France, Germany, and Austria; and in the King of Prussia it had found a most zealous advocate. Temperance Societies had also been formed in Bombay, Madras, the Island of Ceylon, New South Wales, and New Zealand.

In July, 1836, Hamilton College, in the United States, conferred on Professor Edgar the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. The announcement was conveyed to him by his old friend and fellow-student the Rev. Dr. Penney, who, when on a visit to Ireland seven years before, had prompted him to commence the temperance reformation. Dr. Penney, who was now President of the College, assured him that the same distinction had been conferred by the Senatus on only five or six others during the four-and-twenty years preceding. In 1860 he received the additional degree of LL.D. from the University of the city of New York. These titles are now so capriciously bestowed and withheld that they are no evidences whatever either of theological, literary, or intellectual superiority. In Holland they have long since been disused in common intercourse; and perhaps the period may not be far distant among ourselves when they will be

laughed out of society. Professor Edgar did not seek for them; but he did not deem it necessary to give offence by declining them when conferred. He was henceforth generally known as *Doctor* Edgar.

CHAPTER V.

THE TEETOTALLERS—OPPOSED BY DR. EDGAR—HIS PUBLICATIONS AGAINST TEETOTALLISM—JUDGE CRAMPTON IN BELFAST—JAMES GIBSON, ESQ., AND ALEXANDER DICKEY, ESQ.—DR. EDGAR'S SPEECH AT A SOIREE IN THE BELFAST COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS—JUDGE CRAMPTON'S CORRESPONDENCE—CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN DR. EDGAR AND MR. BUCKINGHAM—DR. EDGAR PARTIALLY DESISTS FROM PROSECUTING THE TEMPERANCE AGITATION.

HE appearance of the name Teetotaller—a word coined about thirty years ago—marks the commencement of a schism among the friends of the temperance reformation. The temperance pledge hitherto had been, "WE RESOLVE TO ABSTAIN FROM DISTILLED SPIRIT, AND PROMOTE TEMPERANCE." Teetotallers maintained that, if reformed drunkards were permitted to use fermented liquors, they were in danger of sinking again into habits of inebriety; and they insisted on a pledge requiring complete abstinence from all intoxicating drinks, wines included. Dr. Edgar, and many of the friends who had assisted him in founding the original Temperance Societies, were by no means prepared to accede to this proposal. They held that ardent spirits and wine should not stand in the same category. Ardent

spirits, said they, may be used in cases of disease and under the advice of the physician, for one poison may be employed to counteract or neutralize another; but, for common purposes, they are worse than useless. "In their own nature and properties they are most decidedly noxious. They possess similar properties as laudanum, henbane, deadly nightshade, and such substances as all allow to be poisonous. The moderate use of distilled spirits is of itself not only calculated to prepare the body for disease, but actually to produce disease; and entire abstinence from distilled spirits is absolutely essential to the enjoyment of sound health."* Wine, they contended, is quite a different article; as, in its own nature, it is nutritive and refreshing. The pledge hitherto used had, they argued, proved sufficient for the reclamation of drunkards; for though, as might have been expected, a considerable number of those who had joined the Society had fallen off, multitudes had faithfully adhered to their engagement. This pledge did not warrant excess in wine, as every one who signed it was bound to avoid everything leading to intemperance. It was notorious, they added, that wine was not the great cause of drunkenness. In various countries, where it is so abundant, there is comparatively little inebriety. Besides, said they, our societies are established, not merely to reform drunkards, but also to save the sober from the vortex of intemperance; and why require them to abstain from that which they are not likely to abuse, and which

* First report of the Ulster Temperance Society, Sept. 7th, 1830.

may often be beneficial? The use of wine, they pleaded farther, is warranted in Scripture. The Apostle Paul said to his young friend Timothy, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities" (1 Tim. v. 23.)

Teetotallism gave Dr. Edgar much annoyance and embarrassment. Those who advocate extreme measures are very apt to gain the ear of the multitude; and this new scheme did not want supporters. A few worthy individuals became its advocates; but among its leaders were men known not to be very friendly to Christianity; and some of them occasionally blurted out infidelity. Our Lord required His disciples to remember His love by partaking of the fruit of the vine; but there were teetotallers who used water, instead of wine, at the Communion. "If I thought," said one of them, "that God had made either malt or grapes for the purpose of yielding an intoxicating liquor, I would never worship Him again." The teetotallers had advocates of coarse minds and little character, who applied the most offensive epithets to those who contended for adherence to the original temperance pledge, denouncing them as "endeavouring to bolster up the drunkard-making and drunkard-shielding system." Dr. Edgar believed that these men were about to bring the whole movement into discredit; and, girding himself for the struggle, met them in a spirit of the most determined opposition. "When the devil," said he, "cannot upset the coach, he mounts the box

and drives. Swarms of fanatics rose in Luther's day under the bright sun of reformation; and should it seem strange for the temperance reformation to have its extravagances and ultraisms too? * * * Our wise, scriptural, and efficient system did not continue to please some who were once highly delighted with it, and not a few of whom it reformed; they have, therefore, formed themselves into a new society, refusing to admit as members or acknowledge as brethren those pledged to abstain from distilled spirit and promote temperance. * * * The great discovery which these reformers have made is, that if no man drink, no man will get drunk, and that therefore no man should drink. This you will acknowledge to be sufficiently simple and plain. What a pity we could not apply it to meat as well as to drink, and thus prevent all gluttony by the sublime logic—if no man eat, no man will become a glutton; therefore no man should eat. * * * Unhappily, however, this expeditious short cut is not the plan which the Bible teaches or which God approves. * * * It blasphemously says to the Creator—if you had created no intoxicating substance, you would not have been troubled with drunkenness, and your Spirit was only scratching the surface when He wrote, 'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess,' when He should have written, 'Don't drink at all.'"

Dr. Edgar published a variety of works on the subject of teetotallism. Among these may be mentioned his discourse entitled, "Scriptural Temperance," ad-

dressed originally to an immense audience assembled in the Presbyterian Church, Fisherwick Place, Belfast. It was preached at the request of the Ulster Temperance Society, and was adopted and republished by the British and Foreign Temperance Society. One of the most elaborate of his anti-teetotal productions, "The Limitations of Liberty," was dedicated to the Bishop of London, to whom the author was well known. This work was submitted, before publication, to the late Rev. Dr. Carson, of Tubbermore, a minister remarkable for his acuteness and vigour of mind. Dr. Edgar was much gratified by his approval of the performance. Its dedication to the Bishop of London—the President of the British and Foreign Temperance Society—was most appropriate, as that prelate quite approved of Dr. Edgar's views, and had long taken a deep interest in the movement he had originated. Another of his publications on teetotallism is entitled, "The Intoxicating Drinks of the Hebrews." This, which is one of his larger tracts, is a learned dissertation on wine as used among the ancient Israelites. It was also republished by the British and Foreign Temperance Society. His discourse on "The Temperance of Christ" is another of his anti-teetotal productions.

When his friend Mr. Crampton was elevated to the bench, Professor Edgar congratulated him by letter on his promotion; and at the same time expressed some anxiety to know whether his Lordship would deem it inconsistent with his advanced rank to appear before

the public as an advocate of the temperance reform. This communication did not remain long unanswered. Judge Crampton was a man of earnest piety; he had embarked in the temperance cause from a sincere desire to benefit his country; and though his official duties now prevented him from acting exactly the same part as heretofore, he gave his correspondent to understand that he still felt the same interest in the Society; and that, as a supporter of its claims, he was not at all disposed to indulge either pride or indolence by pleading the dignity of his new position. The following letter will be perused with no little interest:—

"10th October, 1834.
"1, *Merrion Square.*

"My dear Professor,—You ask how my new station will affect the temperance cause? It will not (be assured) abate my zeal in furthering that good cause, in which I had the pleasure of being a brother missionary with the worthy Tobias and yourself. I cannot, perhaps, repeat such a circuit with my temperance associates as that to which I allude, and upon which I always look back with pleasure, but I trust to be able to find both time and opportunity for aiding the progress of the temperance reformation. I expect to be enrobed in a few days, and to commence my judicial duties with the next term, on the 3rd of November. You may well suppose how happy I am to remove from the stormy sea of politics, into the comparatively still

judicial life which my new position promises to me. I cannot but be thankful to Him who overrules all things to eventual good.—I remain, dear Professor, yours very truly,

"P. C. CRAMPTON."

Judge Crampton continued to act as President of the Hibernian Temperance Society; and we have already seen that he filled the chair at the great Dublin Temperance Festival, in 1836. His Belfast admirers, also anxious to enjoy his patronage, solicited the honour of a visit; and he accordingly agreed to preside at the annual meeting of the Ulster Temperance Society, in December, 1838. During the few days he remained in the capital of the North he was the guest of Dr. Edgar. His visit was celebrated by a triple ovation. A public meeting of the Society was held on the 18th of December, at noon, in Dr. Edgar's church; on the evening of the same day there was a temperance soiree in the Assembly Room, Commercial Buildings; and on the evening of the following day there was another public meeting in the Presbyterian Church, Fisherwick Place. On all these occasions Judge Crampton took the chair, and delivered excellent addresses. In his introductory speech in Dr. Edgar's church he adverted to the rise and progress of temperance societies. "When last," said he, "I had the pleasure of addressing a Belfast audience on the subject, the cause was in its infancy; its friends were few, and many of them were

not very warm in its behalf. The converts to the cause may now be reckoned by thousands—nay, by tens of thousands. If we could have counted the host of stars that spangled the firmament yesternight, we might be able to count the members of the society. Who is now ashamed to be known as a member, when our gracious and lovely queen has nobly become our patroness? I have called Belfast the citadel of the temperance cause, and am I not right in doing so? Belfast was its birth-place; and it was the Irish missionaries that colonised Scotland, and England, and Wales. I may say at this moment there is not a society in existence which numbers so many as the temperance society. Great Britain has spread temperance over the world. There is not a country in the vast dominions of Great Britain in which temperance societies are not to be found." *

Among the other speakers who came forward to advocate the cause on this occasion was one of its earliest and most influential friends, James Gibson, Esq., now Chairman of the county of Donegal. Counsellor Gibson, who had, shortly before, been M.P. for Belfast, spoke both in Dr. Edgar's church and at the soiree in the Commercial Buildings. His presence gave additional *eclât* to the celebration. The master of the ceremonies at the soiree was Alexander Dickey, Esq., now Bursar of Queen's College, Bel-

* The Rev. H. M. Waddell, then a missionary in the West Indies, happened, when on a visit to his native land, to be present at a meeting of the temperance society in Belfast. On his return to Jamaica he immediately commenced the temperance reformation in that island.

fast—the helper in every good work. Mr. Dickey was characterised by Dr. Edgar at this festival as "the generalissimo of them all." Only a mere fraction of those who wished to be present could obtain tickets of admission, and the pressure about the doors was tremendous; but Mr. Dickey, by his masterly arrangements, contrived to preserve the best order; and the re-union afforded to those who joined in it the highest satisfaction. It was given by the students of the Royal Academical Institution.* At this period candidates for the ministry under the care of the Synod of Ulster were required to study theology only two sessions of six months each; and many of them, attracted by the fame of Dr. Chalmers, passed through their divinity course in the University of Edinburgh. The Secession students were not nearly so numerous; but of late they had been rapidly increasing; they studied theology four sessions of three months each; and it happened in 1838 that the Belfast divinity class of the Secession church, being unusually large, outnumbered the corresponding class of the Synod of Ulster. The students of both classes joined cordially in the soiree; many of them acted as stewards; and not less than 250 of these candidates for the ministry were members of the temperance society.

Dr. Edgar, throughout the day and evening, had

* As early as 1835 a temperance society was established among the students and professors, of which the Rev. James Morgan was president, and the Rev. Thomas Hincks, the Rev. George Bellis, and Professor Stevelly, vice-presidents.

remained rather in the background, as he never cared to obtrude himself unnecessarily on an audience; but, towards the close of the soiree, there was a loud call for his appearance. It may be that he was not altogether unprepared; and he was certainly not disposed to resist the appeal now made to him from all quarters. He was in high spirits, and in excellent trim for making an effective address. Rising up, amidst general cheering, he accordingly proceeded to deliver a speech which must undoubtedly be classed among his happiest efforts :—

"It would be vanity, and not modesty," said he, "to refuse such a call; yet it was more than his vanity could bear to address this Students' Temperance Soiree, for, while looking over this splendid meeting, he could not forget that in his class this year—the largest divinity class of Presbyterian students that was ever in Ireland—there was not a single individual who had not joined the temperance society before he joined his class. The first meeting on temperance in the old world was fresh in his recollection now. It was held in the back room of the Tract Depository, a few perches from this, and the little coal-hole of the little room would have held them all; now they assembled in the most splendid and largest room which Belfast could furnish; and yet, if all had got tickets of admission who wanted them, that great room would not have contained the one-tenth of them. At their first meeting they had, it is true, six ministers of six religious denominations; but then these would soon

pass away, and their great cause might die with them; now they had 250 of the men who were to fill the pulpits of the gospel when they were gone, and through them he saw the blessings of the temperance reformation extending away, on—on into future years; and through the agency of their successors, away, on —on still, till the sounding of the last trump—and on —on yet, through the ceaseless round of a retributive eternity. While the Ulster Temperance Society boasted of her prosperity and her triumphs, she did not forget that, with a single exception, all her agents for years past had been students of the Royal Belfast Institution; that the two persons selected for going forth through the provinces now, had been selected from the two great religious bodies whose students throng the benches of the College; and that an important part of the voluntary agency which has spread temperance so widely over Ulster, was the agency of young candidates for the holy ministry. It was most important, for their own sakes and for the sake of posterity, that their students should cherish a most cordial abhorrence of intemperance in all its forms. Dr. Adam Clarke gave in his memoir a spice of his early history, which he particularly recommended to their notice. Adam's father had as his nearest neighbour one Pierce Quinlin. How much it had cost to paint his nose he could not say, but it was red and fiery enough to phiz with cold water; his eyes stood out with fat, and his paunch was enormous. Adam, though a great favourite with him, could not bear the

look of him. One day, a deaf and dumb man who, like too many of his class before our friend Mr. Martin took them in charge, professed to *spae* fortunes, foretold that young Adam would have a huge paunch and be fond of the bottle. These were the two things of which, above all things else, young Clarke entertained the most cordial abhorrence. Even then he had a high sense of the power of prayer; and rushing out of the house, he plunged into the first thicket, and falling on his knees, cried out most fervently, 'Lord have mercy on me, and never suffer me to be like Pierce Quinlin.' He trusted they were in the fair way now to have among all their future ministers not a single Pierce Quinlin. It was most important so to inflame their students with temperance zeal, that they should set the whole country on fire when they returned home. The mother of Dominick, the founder of the Inquisition, dreamed before he was born that she had given birth to a black whelp, with a flaming torch in his mouth. Dominick's friends said this was emblematical of the flaming light which he would light up over the world; but his enemies took it upon them to say that it was an emblem of the flaming fires of his own dearly beloved Inquisition. Now he (Dr. Edgar) did not ask any of his young friends to take up so dubious an article as Dominick's torch; he would not let them carry on any more fiery persecution than the Americans were doing the other day, when they tarred and feathered and set fire to a whisky barrel; but he would send them forth over hill and dale, every man

to gather the clans in this glorious war against our country's enemy, like Roderic Dhu's Malise, when he carried a fiery cross; and we'll say to each of them, as he starts away from us, like one of the fellows with the holy turf that flew round the country some years since—

> 'Speed! Malise, speed! the dun-deer's hide,
> On fleeter foot was never tied;
> The muster-place be Lanark mead;
> Speed forth the signal! clansmen speed!'

"It is most important that our students should be inoculated with temperance principles before leaving college, because they will thus become centres of influence for good in all the neighbourhoods over this broad province. Young ladies need not smile when he talked of a student's influence; he could tell them that at home he was a very influential personage, not merely in the eyes of his mother, but of all the neighbours; in fact he was the very next biggest man in the parish to the minister himself. Some of them here in Belfast did not know his worth, he acknowledged, but there was a reason for that. Where good men are plenty they don't prize them, but if they were as scarce as Queen Anne's farthings, they would know the worth of them. A member of Parliament is a very great man here, where we have only a couple of them; but if they were about St. Stephen's, in London, where they could not get walking the streets for tramping on them, they would think far more (especially if they were sharp set for a six o'clock dinner), he assured

them, of six P.M. than of six M.P.'s. Now the philosophy of this case was exactly the same as that of Whittington's cat, which they knew made him three times Lord Mayor of London. Whittington's cat was very highly prized because there was no cat but himself, while the mice and rats were swarming like locusts; and it was just the same way in the reign of one of the old Welsh kings that brother Stevelly and he were examining the students about the other day for Dr. Tennent's gold medal. The rats were so plenty in his day, and the cats so scarce, that he not only made a law fixing the price of kittens before they got their eyes open, and after they had caught the first mouse, but fining any man who killed the cat that guarded the king's meal-ark, in as much corn as would entirely cover the cat when hung up by the tip of the tail. Now, just let them look at the change which had taken place in the value of cat flesh since those days. Though there was such a congregation of cats in his yard every night (every one of them with her eyes open, he was sure), that they would think, judging from the noise of them, that there had assembled all the 'kits, cats, and wives that ever went into St. Ives,' yet nobody would take one of them off his hands for love or money. If, then, the student were not as highly prized here as he ought to be, his value is known at home; he has been separated from his family for a high and holy profession; he is the subject of many a high hope, and of many a fervent prayer; the young look to him with respect, and the old with heartfelt

interest; and the pious and the good unite in offering up for him the petition in which they most cordially joined, 'By the God of thy fathers, who shall help thee, and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of Heaven above; blessings of the deep that lieth under; blessings of the breasts and of the womb; the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills, they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separated from his brethren.' Such were the men whom they sent forth as the missionaries of temperance; such were the young volunteers who are to fight the battle when they were in the dust; and as they pass away from us we give them, like the old Spartan mother, their father's shield, saying, 'Return with it, or return on it.' Whatever influence their talents, their acquirements, their piety, or their great destiny gave them, they trusted they would employ for the overthrow of those drunken falsehoods and drunken customs which have made their country a slave. Whatever be the custom—whether drinking at market, or wake, or funeral, or whatever it be—that compels men to drink, it was a vile custom, an infernal custom, and it must be put down. It trained drunkards; it was a class in the school of drunkenness; it made men slaves. Men lost their liberty under such customs by little and little, and before they knew it; and they think themselves free when all traces of liberty are gone. 'Papa, papa,' said a little boy to his father, while drinking

spirits, 'take care, or you'll be drunk.' 'No, no, boy,' said his father, 'I measured it out in a spoon.' 'Ah, but papa dear, the spoon ran over.'

"The worst of all tyranny was tyranny exercised over men who had lost the spirit and the wish to be free; and such was the tyranny which spirit-drinking customs exercised over millions. There were many, however, who felt, deeply felt, the galling yoke, and let them rise to their rescue. It was horrible to think, that in a country boasting of freedom like theirs, there should be multitudes, at their doors, ground down by a slavery more despotic, more senseless, more embruted, than was ever practised by the Dey of Algiers. One of the most astonishing of all the astonishing things about the tyranny of whisky-drinking, was the shortness of the time in which it had grown up into its present most insufferable power. He was talking, the other day, of old times, to a man of ninety-two, in the county of Down, and among other marvellous things, this old man told him that he remembered well when there was not a dead pig, nor a firkin of butter, nor a glass of whisky sold in Belfast. He remembered when there was just one public house in Saintfield—not a spirit shop; and comparatively lately his neighbours had an opportunity of getting spirituous liquor from an old fellow called the 'bulger,' who carried brandy round the country in two firkins under him, on a straw suggen, upon a stump of a pony, without a stump of a tail. The only intoxicating drink then in use among the farmers was beer, which they brewed for them-

selves, and not very much of that either; but a father considered himself bound to have a good brewing of beer at the birth of each of his children. His good old friend had no brewing at his birth, as his father was away in Scotland at the time, bringing over the third Seceding minister that ever was in Ireland; and he says, that though people in his young days did take of a time a sober drink of home-brewed beer, yet that he never saw among them any such thing as drunkenness; and he was so steady a temperance man himself, that when a public meeting assembled in his parish to put down treating at wakes and funerals, he declared, like a real Irishman, that 'if he were a living man when he died, he would not give a single johnny of whisky either at his wake or his funeral.' Now he did not request attention to the horrible change which had taken place in the lifetime of this one man, from one public house in such a place as Saintfield, to their present state, with every twentieth house, throughout the whole country, a whisky shop; and twenty-three public houses between Belfast and Antrim. He did not bid them consider the horrible fact that the distilleries of Ireland and Scotland were burning down and converting into poison each year, 400,000 tons of grain, or in other words, provision for two millions of people. He would rather at present exhibit the change, as illustrated in the tyranny of drinking customs, which have trampled liberty under foot. He had no time for anything but a solitary example, but that was enough.

"Some time ago, he was requested by a very decent man to marry his daughter to a coal-porter. Being surprised at both the father of the girl and the intended bridegroom entreating him not to tell any one, not even the man's own brother, of the time of the intended marriage, he (Dr. E.) asked 'what was the reason of all this secresy?' and he received the following account, which he afterwards found to be perfectly correct:—When it was known at the coal quay that a porter had got married, immediately every man unyokes his horse, ties a bunch of white ribbons to his ears, and then the whole squadron, having mounted the bare backs of their horses, off they set—some lame horses, some blind, some long tails, some short, some no tail at all—away, away, like a great cavalry troop, to the bridegroom's house, and having caught him, and mounted him on the foremost horse, away they go again—tramp, tramp, splash, splash—to some favourite public house, where they drink a footing of perhaps two or three pounds at the bridegroom's expense. 'Now,' said the young man to him, 'I can neither afford two pounds, nor have I any inclination to spend two pounds in any such way; and I have still less inclination to join with them in such a drunken debauch; and yet,' said he, 'if they know that I have got married, my life won't be worth having till I give them the customary treat.' Well, he kept his secret, and thought that everything was right; till the Sabbath but one after the marriage, observing him absent from worship, he inquired the reason, and heard with ex-

treme indignation that the coal-porters had found out the marriage, and because he had not given them their treat, they had given him such an unmerciful beating that he was unable to go abroad.

"Now, my lord judge, I appeal to you, as one of the judges of the land, are we to sit carelessly still, and endure such abominations? What signifies, my lord, our glorious constitution, what signifies our boasted civil and religious liberty, if an insulting, and besotting, and insufferable tyranny, and yet a base and despicable tyranny, is thus to trample us down? What sentence, my lord, do you pass from the bench upon the wretch who picks his neighbour's pocket, or boldly meets the traveller on the highway with the weapon of death? and yet, what is pocket-picking or highway robbery to such robbery as this? To lose our money merely is a light thing, and the loss can be easily repaired; but to be robbed and insulted too, to be trampled in dirt by a vile drunken tyranny—to be compelled to give our hard-earned money, which we won so dearly for our beloved wives and dear, dear children, to be compelled to give it to the bloated whisky-seller, for making drunkards and beggars of the husbands of broken-hearted wives, and the fathers of naked hunger-bitten children; and, worse than all, to be ridiculed and insulted, and have life made a burden, to compel us to desert our own fireside for the lewdness, and blasphemy, and drunkenness of the whisky hell! Oh, sirs, it is more than flesh and blood can bear. We can't bear it, and we

won't bear it. Come, kind friends, let us pledge ourselves to one another, and to our noble-minded Chairman, that from this night forward our motto and our cry shall be, 'Raze, raze to its foundation.' It is going down, friends, rapidly; it is going, going, gone! I saw a splendid whisky sign-board last week, the sign of the 'Four Alls,' as they are called, with the picture of the soldier fighting for all, and the farmer paying for all, and so forth, upon it, and its motto, 'All welcome to the Four Alls.' What a noble motto for a whisky sign-board! *all*, that is, all that have money or credit, welcome to drink all. It is something like the motto that Smollett tells of as exhibited in London in his day, 'Drunk for a penny, dead drunk for twopence, and straw into the bargain.' And where do ye think I saw this redoubtable sign? Up against a stump in Smithfield, I declare, near the town pump or fountain, or whatever it is called; whether it came thither to make grog or wash itself, I can't say. When our friend Mason and his American brethren want to tell you that a business can't get along, and is at a dead stand, they say it is up against a stump.* If I had been called upon to give you a toast to-night over your tea, I would have given—'The whole spirit trade up against a stump!' And up against a stump it is, with a vengeance. Its doom is sealed, its abominations have been exposed; the broad sun shines down

* This expression has arisen from the state of the new-made roads in America. The stumps of the trees are left in the ground, and often occasion great delay to the traveller, by stopping the progress of his conveyance; and when this is the case, they are said to be "up against a stump."

on its hateful pollutions; a mighty power is each day gathering, not such as at the French Revolution, cried, 'To the Bastile,' but an omnipotent power of truth and public opinion is bearing down on spirit-drinking, and spirit-selling, and spirit-making in all their forms, which shall sweep them before it. Soon shall the curse of the Jew be on all the implements of spirit-drinking, 'they shall be sold to their enemies, and no man shall buy them;' and soon shall the pure welkin above us, freed from the foul smoke of distilleries, be rent with the triumphant acclamation—'Babylon the great is fallen! fallen! and shall rise no more!'"

"To attempt," says the reporter, "to mark in the usual manner the reception which the foregoing speech met from the audience would be vain, as from beginning to end there was such a tumult of applause and laughter, that the speaker could scarcely proceed at all."

The account of the proceedings at the soiree speedily circulated through the town; and multitudes crowded, with increased interest, to the third meeting in Fisherwick Place Presbyterian Church. The spacious edifice was thronged in every part, and the assembly was one of the largest ever convened in Ulster in connexion with the temperance movement.

The visit of Judge Crampton to the capital of the north gave a fresh impulse to the temperance cause. His station, his high Christian character, and his popularity as a speaker, attracted many to these meetings who, under other circumstances, would have never

thought of attendance. On his return to Dublin, he addressed the following communication to his host. This letter shows incidentally how eagerly the writer availed himself of every opportunity to promote the diffusion of temperance principles :—

"Friday, Dec. 21st, 1838.

"*Merrion Square.*

"My dear Edgar,—My autograph will show you that I am at anchor in this place; it is, however, but for a moment, as I am about starting for St. Valeri,* for which place Mrs. C. had set off before my arrival in town yesterday. I had a pleasant journey, my object being quiet. No companion inside the coach was with me till we arrived at Castlebellingham, then I took in the Rev. Mr. ———, son of Admiral ———; his head full of church auxiliary schemes. I belaboured him on temperance most of the way to Dublin. He is almost, but not altogether one of us. He has the Christian scruple, 'don't do a practical good lest a speculative evil may ensue'—that is NOT the way he puts it.

"Pray return to the committee my most cordial and grateful acknowledgments for the very high (I fear too high) honour which their parting compliment, through you, confers upon me. Mr. Morgan was so good as to put into my hands a 'Penny Magazine,' containing an extremely good view of the wine questions. Read it if you have not done so.

* His country seat at Bray, Co. Wicklow.

"Pray is there any record of my temperance speech made at Belfast in 1830? Mr. Morgan spoke of it in such flattering terms that I am anxious to see it. 'Laudari a laudato' is the best praise that man can receive from man. Perhaps you may find it in some old newspaper. I send no message from Mrs. C., as I have not yet seen her; but, from myself, present my warm thanks to Mrs. Edgar for her kind and courteous hospitalities, and my best wishes for the welfare of herself, and all hers.—Yours always truly,

"P. C. CRAMPTON."

The reader has been already presented with a note from Judge Crampton on his elevation to the Bench, and he may perhaps not be unwilling to peruse another communication addressed by him to his friend in the North twenty-five years afterwards. The following letter, written not long before his death, in 1862, reveals a spirit breathing the atmosphere of the better country.

"Kildare Place,
"*Jan.* 25, 1859.

"MY DEAR PROFESSOR,—I thank you for your kind enquiries, which I answer at once. I am still a judge, but on *Friday next* I lay aside my robes, relinquish the strife of tongues, and become a man of *peace*. What a heavenly thing is peace! it was our Lord's salutation to his apostles. He left his peace with them, and it should be the aspiration of every Christian man and minister to obtain and to inculcate peace.

"No doubt we are here in a state of war, and should wear on us the whole armour of God, wielding also the sword of the Spirit; but our war is not with our fellow-men, but with principalities and powers of darkness, and with our inward corruptions. How beautifully and impressively old Smith (the Methodist preacher) used to preach on the text, 'for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.'

"Hating war and loving peace as I do, do not understand me as objecting to the exposure of known existing grievances, either in church or state, for the purpose of reforming and purifying public bodies, but let us do it in the spirit of that wisdom so beautifully described by St. James, and this I trust we shall do both in advancing the good old cause of sanctified temperance and in exposing abuses. — With Mrs. Crampton's kind regards, I remain, dear Edgar, yours faithfully,

"P. C. CRAMPTON."

In the spring of 1841 a correspondence between Dr. Edgar and James Silk Buckingham, Esq., which was immediately published, led to no little criticism. In 1834 the member for Sheffield had won the hearts of the friends of Temperance by the energy he exhibited as chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Drunkenness; and, when he visited Belfast some time afterwards, Dr. Edgar had paid him very marked attention. Mr. Buckingham supported himself partly by the delivery of public lectures; when in the capital

of the North he had pursued his vocation; Dr. Edgar had exerted all his influence to secure him remunerative audiences; and the lecturer had left the town considerably richer than when he entered it. At a subsequent period, when engaged in an electioneering struggle, the Belfast professor had been solicited for assistance, and had raised among his friends a considerable sum of money, which was never repaid. Meanwhile Mr. Buckingham had veered round to teetotallism, and had distinguished himself by his rather extravagant advocacy of the new system. All this time Dr. Edgar had been narrowly scanning his career; he had been led, by various circumstances, to regard him with distrust; and, when the correspondence occurred, had adopted the conclusion that he was a clever adventurer in whom he could place little confidence. When under this impression, that gentleman sent him a letter requesting him to become a subscriber to a work on America which he was about to publish, and which was understood to contain a vindication of teetotal principles. Such an application from one to whom he had already made pecuniary advances, and who was fully aware of his strong aversion to teetotallism, appeared to him rather a cool piece of effrontery; and, on the impulse of the moment, he penned an answer which certainly betrayed symptoms of irritation. "As," said he, "I entertain the most confirmed abhorrence of teetotallism, as insulting to God and disgraceful to man; and as the public press attributes to you teetotallism in its worst

form, it grieves me much to be compelled to say that I could not, with my present views and feelings, give your work my countenance." Mr. Buckingham who, as it appeared, had carefully preserved a copy of his own original letter, transmitted a long rejoinder containing a plausible critique on this reply; and then, without any permission, forthwith published the whole correspondence! The appearance of the letters in the newspapers created no little astonishment: that portion of the press which had long been opposed to the father of the temperance reformation delighted in giving them circulation; many could not comprehend what had prompted Dr. Edgar to write so curt and tart a communication; he himself did not think it necessary to furnish any explanation; and some of his friends regretted that, in dealing with so adroit a personage, he had not acted a little more cautiously. Those who were fully acquainted with the facts condemned Mr. Buckingham for publishing, without leave, the hasty note of one to whom he had been under such weighty obligations; and not a few regarded the proceeding, perhaps uncharitably, as an artful dodge intended to secure additional subscribers for his forthcoming publication.

About this period Dr. Edgar desisted from the more energetic prosecution of the temperance reformation. He had now laboured for twelve years with amazing activity; and the amount of writing, and travelling, and preaching, and speech-making performed, may appear almost incredible. Wesley himself in his best

days scarcely laboured more vigorously than did Dr. Edgar during part of his temperance career. But his constitution, naturally robust, was fast giving way beneath these gigantic efforts; and, on consulting the highest medical authorities, he was told distinctly that, were he to persevere in his present course, he must speedily cut short his earthly existence. His mental power was unabated; but rest was absolutely necessary for his exhausted frame. For the remainder of his life, by strict attention to diet and regimen, and by steady adherence to his own rules of temperance, he continued to enjoy tolerable health; but he was obliged to desist from that prolonged and exhausting exertion to which he had for years been accustomed. He had, however, no idea whatever of giving up the temperance cause. By occasional sermons, speeches, tracts, and letters in the newspapers, he still kept up attention to the movement. Some of his latest publications refer to his favourite theme.

CHAPTER VI.

ERECTION OF A NEW CHURCH—THE OLD CHURCH EMPLOYED AS A MISSION STATION—ITS SUBSEQUENT HISTORY—DR. EDGAR'S DIVINITY CLASS—ADDRESS AND PRESENTATION FROM THE STUDENTS—UNION BETWEEN THE SECESSION SYNOD AND THE SYNOD OF ULSTER—THE LEADERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY—INTEMPERANCE AND PROSTITUTION—ERECTION OF THE ULSTER FEMALE PENITENTIARY—ITS ARRANGEMENTS—TESTIMONIAL TO DR. EDGAR—MISS BURNSIDE—DONATION OF £300 FROM THE QUEEN—LORD MORPETH AND DR. EDGAR—DR. EDGAR PREACHES FOR THE LONDON SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF YOUNG FEMALES.

THE reader has now been presented with a connected view of Dr. Edgar's course as a Temperance Reformer; and little has hitherto been said of his labours as a Pastor or a Professor. But it is not to be supposed that he was meanwhile neglectful of his official duties. When moving Ireland, England, and Scotland, as the Apostle of Temperance, he contrived to be seldom absent from his flock on the Sabbath; and his little meeting-house, over which at first a few humble worshippers were scattered, was at length quite overcrowded. It therefore became necessary to take steps for the erection of a larger edifice, fit for the accommodation of the increasing congregation. The new church—about three-fold the capacity

of the original building, and the most ornamental structure of the kind hitherto erected in Ulster in connexion with the Secession synod—was opened for worship in January, 1837. It cost upwards of £2,000. Dr. Edgar's temperance labours had not prevented the growth of his congregation; for, within a few years, it had been quadrupled. At a former period the one third of the heads of families connected with it had been engaged in the spirit trade; but, by this time, almost all the spirit-dealers had either deserted his ministry, or given up the occupation. In the good providence of God he was not permitted to be a loser by his uncompromising opposition to an unholy traffic. On the very first day for the letting of pews in his new church, his stipend was doubled. At the end of the next eighteen months his congregation had farther increased one third.

The new structure was erected in the immediate vicinity of Alfred Place. Some of those who had worshipped in the original edifice might have cherished an attachment to the old walls; and had Dr. Edgar been actuated by the narrow spirit exhibited towards himself in the beginning of his pastorate, he would have caused the building either to be pulled down or to be devoted to some secular purpose. But he was far above the indulgence of such paltry jealousy. Knowing that the population of Belfast was rapidly increasing, and that multitudes were living neglectful of divine ordinances, he had a missionary appointed—whose duty it was to seek after these wanderers, and

to endeavour, if possible, to gather them into the deserted meeting-house. The scheme proved successful. In due time a congregation was organized, and a minister ordained. When the chapel became too small for the increasing flock, another church was built in another locality ; and the Presbyterian congregation of Eglinton Street, of which the Rev. James Martin is now pastor, was the second swarm which hived off from Alfred Place. A missionary was again employed to go into the lanes and alleys, and to invite those not in attendance on the public means of grace, to come and fill the house of God. The attempt was once more successful. Another congregation was collected, and another minister appointed. When the building became again insufficient to accommodate the worshippers, another church was raised in another neighbourhood; and the Presbyterian congregation of Argyle Place, over which the Rev. Lamont Hutchinson presides, was the third swarm which left the little tabernacle. Meanwhile the Irish Presbyterian church had completely severed its connexion with the Royal Academical Institution; and, for a time, all the Assembly's Collegiate classes met in the chapel of Alfred Place. Dr. Edgar always regretted that a building which had proved of such utility was eventually sold, and converted into a warehouse.

When Judge Crampton presided at the grand temperance celebration in the Commercial Buildings, in December, 1838, Dr. Edgar stated that he had then the largest class of Presbyterian students Ireland had

ever seen. The circumstances which led to its superiority in numbers to the corresponding class of the Synod of Ulster, have already been explained; and though, as we have seen, the attendance in Belfast supplied no decisive test of the strength or prosperity of the two denominations, we are to remember that the Secession church had made its appearance in Ulster little more than ninety years before; and it was a signal evidence of its progress that its professor of theology could now make such a proud announcement. Nor had Dr. Edgar less reason to be satisfied with the quality than with the number of his students. Throughout the Session they were distinguished by diligence and propriety of conduct; every one of them was a member of the temperance society; and some exhibited proofs of superior talent. He was himself in the vigour of his strength; he had recently delivered several of his splendid temperance orations; and the admiration with which he was regarded by his students was almost unbounded. As the close of the session approached, they met together to consider how they could best give expression to their feelings, and agreed to solicit his acceptance of a collection of books. One of their number, Mr. Thomas Millar—afterwards the worthy minister of Lurgan, whose early death occasioned such profound sorrow—was appointed to read the address accompanying the presentation. Such communications are too frequently affairs of mere compliment; but the following document discovers a depth of reverential attachment which cannot be mistaken.

"Rev. Sir,—We, the students of your class, in presenting to you a trifling token of our respect, embrace an opportunity so favourable for testifying our high estimate of your talent and worth. In doing so, it is scarcely necessary to premise, that we abstain altogether from the flattery which is often so freely employed on similar occasions. It would, indeed, Sir, be but a poor compliment to you to resort to flattery, where such sterling worth presents itself.

"As a Professor of Divinity, we are more immediately connected with you; and we cannot look back on the Session now past, without feeling that our minds have been enlightened, solemnized, and elevated by your instructions. It is only those, Sir, who enjoy the high privilege of hearing your lectures from day to day, who can testify with what strength of mind you discuss the important subjects which come under your consideration, and with what clearness and cogency you press home upon the understanding and the heart, those everlasting truths that make wise unto salvation. But it is not in your character of Professor alone that you are esteemed. Who, Sir, that has a feeling for the welfare of our unhappy country, or the promotion of the cause of Christ, does not look with unmingled respect and veneration to the Father of the Temperance Reformation? Can any feeling but that of admiration rise in the breast of him who contemplates your untiring exertions in that great and good cause? It is to you, Sir, under God, the country chiefly owes that moral change, which has revolutionized, in an in-

credibly short time, the old, deep-rooted, and ruinous customs which have so long enslaved our land. And whilst you are the object of the anxious prayer of many a wife and mother whose comfort you have secured—whilst many look forward with deep anxiety for a continuation of your labours, and express an ardent hope for your welfare, we, who know you best, join most cordially in the general admiration and the general prayer.

"As the Student's friend as well as instructor, most of us would be chargeable with deep ingratitude, did we not acknowledge your kindness; for not only in private life, but in the crowded public assembly, and surrounded by the respectability of Belfast, we have had ample testimony that you have our interests at heart.

"Accept then, Dear Sir, of this token of our esteem; and however unworthy it may be of your notice in a pecuniary point of view, it will serve as a remembrancer hereafter, that the students of the Divinity Class of Session 1838-9, were not altogether insensible of your merits, and that they entertain for you an admiration and respect, which time will never efface, and which circumstances cannot alter."

Dr. Edgar was much gratified by this address. His reply, fraught with sound advice, is remarkable for its pathos and beauty.

"My Young Friends,—I return you my very sincere and cordial thanks for your valuable present, and

for the highly complimentary terms in which you have been pleased to express yourselves. The interest, unusually intense and delightful, which had already associated itself in my mind with the Session of 1838-9, has been greatly increased by the very gratifying expression of respect and affection now offered to me by the largest Presbyterian Divinity Class that Ireland ever saw—a class which, for talent, acquirements, and worth, is an ornament to this great National Institution, and which promises to become an inestimable blessing to the land of our birth.

"My whole connexion with the Divinity Students of the Presbyterian Synod of Ireland, has been one unvarying scene of unmingled satisfaction and happiness. The expressions of your satisfaction, which I have now heard, are peculiarly seasonable; for so many of my early friends have been lately carried to their long home, that I have been sometimes alarmed by the thought of being left alone; and though, alas! some are gone, whose place none else can ever fill for me, it is peculiarly gratifying to me to find that I have engaged the affections of any who are the hope of coming years; whose young arms may support, and young voices cheer me in the downhill path of life; and in whose grateful recollection I may hold some little place, when I am gone to the house of the silent: for next to my anxiety and hope that my spirit may go in peace to the bosom of its God, is an earnest wish that my memorial may live in the hearts of the wise and good, long after this frail body has mouldered away in the abode of the worm.

"The wisdom and good taste exercised in the choice of your present are as grateful to me as they are honourable to you. Your object is use, not vain display. In addition to the intrinsic worth of the volumes before me, I shall have a strong inducement to study them, from their association with so many of my dearest friends, and with one of the most interesting and honourable events of my life. While you thus provide the means of mental cultivation, and of increasing improvement for me, you confer an inestimable favour on the congregation committed to my charge; and should your appropriate and valuable present be improved as it deserves, your successors, as well as yourselves, will reap the happy fruits; by you and them the knowledge and practice of divine truth will be more and more widely opened, so that the expression of your kindness, which you have called trifling, may rise in its fruits to a value with which all that earth offers is less than nothing and vanity.

"In reply to your strong approval of my labours as your professor, I can only say, that gratitude for your extreme kindness, added to my anxiety for your best interests, will excite me to strive more earnestly than ever, really to deserve the character which your young warm imagination has drawn. By you, my dear young friends, my character, as a Professor of Divinity, must stand or fall. You go forth to the world as the tokens of my dishonour, or the heralds of my fame; no wonder, therefore, that, with parental anxiety, I say to each of

you, 'my son, if thy heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.'

"Notwithstanding all that has been done by the fathers of the temperance reformation, how soon would the enemy have again come in like a flood, had there not been a young and chosen band like you to gird on their fathers' swords when their fathers fall; and secure the victory, and improve the triumph, when the heroes who fought and conquered in the cause of God, have gone to their everlasting reward.

"My young friends, the hopes of our Church are centred in you; the prospects of unborn generations are with you; a sphere of usefulness, wide as the world and lasting as eternity, is before you. I bid you farewell now, but only for a time. Some of you I expect soon to see taking possession of the responsible and highly honourable spheres for which you have been preparing. Others I hope to see returning with the returning season, advanced in knowledge, in zeal and piety; and if in a mysterious, yet adorable Providence, it should have been purposed that on this side of the grave we shall meet no more, it is a delightful and blessed thought that there are ties which death cannot sever—that there are friendships which survive the corruption of the grave; and that those who are united by faith to the same Saviour, shall live immortal as brethren, and brethren of Christ, after all earth's friendships have been broken and earth's associations have all passed, as the shadow of a cloud, to return no more."

Dr. Edgar was wont to say jocosely that the grand pillars in front of his new church produced the union between the Secession and the Synod of Ulster. The Seceders generally held a somewhat lower social status than the families connected with the other great section of northern Presbyterians; and the Secession Professor believed that the architectural attractions of the building in Alfred Street had rendered his communion less unfashionable, and had prepared the way for its alliance with the wealthier denomination. The growing importance of the Secession was unquestionably indicated by the appearance of the new edifice; but it is certain that the fame of the minister who filled its pulpit had much greater influence than stately columns or alabaster embellishments. For years, good men of the Synod of Ulster had marked with high approval his efforts in the cause of Temperance; they admired his genius and his eloquence; they rejoiced that one bearing the Presbyterian name had been honoured in rendering such service to his generation; and now that their own body had thrown off the incubus of Unitarianism and returned to the old paths of the Westminster Confession, they saw no reason whatever why the two churches should remain any longer separated. Dr. Edgar contributed much to bring the negociations for a union to a speedy and satisfactory termination. His recommendations to his own party had all but the weight of laws; he had great tact and skill in the adjustment of minute arrangements; he was in no way trammelled by the narrow scruples of

extreme sectarianism; and, with the help of a few like-minded brethren of his own Synod, he contrived to remove objections and difficulties which might otherwise have been insurmountable. On Friday, the 10th of July, 1840—the day on which the Union was consummated—the Irish Presbyterian Church designated its first two missionaries to the heathen. On that occasion Dr. Edgar was prevented by an accident from appearing on the platform of the Assembly; but his friend, the Rev. John Weir, of Newry, announced, amidst great cheering, that the minister of Alfred Street had contributed £20 to the fund for sustaining the new evangelistic agency.

As a member of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Dr. Edgar found his position somewhat altered. About ten years before, the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod had each obtained, from Government, an endowment of £100 per annum for their theological chairs. Drs. Hanna and Edgar, with the same emoluments, now became joint-professors for the united body. In the Secession Synod, Dr. Edgar reigned almost without a rival; but in the New Assembly there were ministers who could not be expected to acknowledge his intellectual superiority. Dr. Cooke, long celebrated for the splendour of his eloquence, had vanquished in the Arian controversy Dr. Montgomery, of Dunmurry — one of the greatest masters of oratory of whom Unitarianism could ever boast. Dr. Stewart, of Broughshane, had also signalised himself as a first-rate ecclesiastical de-

bater; and few who had once confronted him on the arena of controversy cared to encounter a second time his clear intellect, his ready wit, and his vigorous logic. With a plain, honest case Dr. Edgar could make a powerful and impressive statement; but he had little taste for the wordy warfare of dialectics; and, in the ardour of discussion, he sometimes left himself open to the attack of a sharp-witted antagonist. In moral influence no man stood higher in the Assembly. He set his face as a flint against all manner of ministerial delinquency, and in cases of discipline might be safely expected to defend the right.

It is well known that intemperance is almost invariably associated with female degradation; and it would appear that, in his inquiries respecting drunkenness, Dr. Edgar was first led to direct his attention to the subject of prostitution. The exertions made by him to provide an asylum for poor victims of crime disposed to return to the paths of purity, supply a striking illustration of the genuine benevolence of his character. In a variety of publications, he has treated of the hapless condition of fallen women. How few would have the moral courage to enter on the discussion of so loathsome a theme! How few would venture to apply to a respectable community of males and females for the means of erecting a penitentiary! In the spirit of Him who came to save publicans and harlots, Dr. Edgar undertook the task, and was completely successful.

A better idea of the establishment erected in Bruns-

wick Street for the benefit of reclaimed females, cannot well be given than what is furnished in a popular work, containing an account of the public institutions of Belfast, which appeared upwards of twenty years ago. In 1841, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, when on a visit to the county Antrim, were much gratified by the inspection of the Ulster Female Penitentiary. In their "Ireland,"* its origin and arrangements are thus described :—

"Some years ago, an attempt to support a female penitentiary in Belfast had been, through the negligence of its managing committee, signally unsuccessful; and its benevolent matron, after having expended the whole of her small property in endeavouring to preserve it in being, was forced to break up the establishment, and cast herself on the charity of her friends. Some compensation was afterwards made her by benevolent individuals; but the cause fell into disrepute; and though, through the labours of the late Thomas Greer Jacob, an institution, founded on the ruins of the former, struggled on for a time in a sort of dying existence, yet with all the influence he could use, he left, at his decease, a dilapidated building, under a heavy rent, with no suitable accommodations, and considerably in debt. Subsequently, this debt was unexpectedly cleared off, yet the relief was but temporary; and the institution was hastening rapidly to dissolution, when its committee requested the Rev. Dr. Edgar to raise a sum sufficient to erect such buildings

* Part XX., p. 61.

and provide such accommodation as the province of Ulster required. His success was triumphant. In Belfast alone, in a few weeks, he collected, in sums of ten pounds and upwards, eighteen hundred pounds, and afterwards nearly double that amount; enabling the committee to pay off the debt of the old institution, all the expense of the new, and to fine down the ground rent to four pounds annually. With the sum thus so generously contributed, a suitable and effective establishment has been erected, and the *separate apartment for each inmate*, the lending library, the system of literary and religious instruction, and the whole facilities for economy, order, and industry, supply a model for similar establishments.

"Not a single applicant has been refused admittance since the opening of the new institution, and every wretched outcast desirous of forsaking the evil of her ways, may find in it a shelter and a home. From the common jails, and from the lowest dens of infamy and crime, its inmates are taken; yet such is the admirable system maintained by its excellent matron, such the kindness and decision of her most judicious management, and such the effective superintendence of the female committee, that, in few private families, are there more peace, and harmony, and kindness; more industry, economy, and good management, than distinguish the 'family circle' of the Ulster Female Penitentiary—strangers though its inmates have been to each other, habituated to crime, neglected or perverted by parents from earliest infancy, tempted and

ruined by seducers, and thrust out and deserted by the world. Though the ordinary fare of the institution is not superior to that of prisoners in jail, and though no recompense whatever is given for labour, yet such is the regular and persevering industry of the inmates, and such the perfection of the whole apparatus for work, that, on an average, ten pounds annually are received for the work of each of the girls, though one-half of them are enfeebled by disease and hardship, or, previously, unacquainted with any species of employment; and though all of them belong to a class proverbially known as '*idle*.'

"One most valuable improvement has been fully carried out in this Institution—that of separate and detached sleeping rooms; each penitent has a small chamber *of her own;* this at once gives her an impression that she—so late the outcast and despised—has recovered an inheritance; her room, large enough to hold her bed, table, chair, and, from its height, certain of a healthy temperature, *is her own;* a spot where she can retire to, where she can think, and read, and pray, and weep without being observed; where she can commune with her own heart, think over the past, and even *hope* for the future; there she cannot be disturbed,—the house is her refuge—her asylum, but the room is *her own*—HER HOME.

"In one of these little rooms, the matron told us a poor girl was dying of consumption. She was wasted to a shadow, but her eyes were bright, and full of that delusive hope which lights but to the grave. 'She was

very happy,' she said, 'and thankful to God who had saved her; and when she got better, she would tell others of that great salvation;' but she could hardly say even so much, panting as she was, for the treacherous breath that was flitting from her lips. There was a rose in a small jug on her little table, that had dropped away, leaf by leaf, upon the white cloth that covered it; there were only two or three remaining, and the yellow stamens, the very heart of the once blooming flower, had a crushed and withering look; the similitude was painful in the extreme; it is impossible to say if she read our feelings; but while we could hardly repress our tears, her thin white lips smiled joyfully; it was more than we could bear."

The burthen of erecting the Ulster Female Penitentiary rested entirely on Dr. Edgar; and, aware of the weighty responsibility of the undertaking, he resolved to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the statistics of prostitution in the metropolis of the north. For this purpose, accompanied by one or two policemen, he visited every den of infamy in the town. He discovered, as the result of his investigations, that Belfast contained 59 brothels, with 236 abandoned female inmates. He also visited the principal penitentiaries of the three kingdoms, and minutely examined their formation and system of management. When the Ulster Penitentiary was in process of erection, his attention was unremitting; he was there late and early; and every part of the structure was submitted to his critical inspection. He knew well how to magnify his

office as a minister of Christ; and, on a fitting occasion, no man could better assert his dignity; but, when the laundry department of the Institution—to which he looked mainly for its maintenance—was being fitted up, he made no scruple to creep into a boiler, and satisfy himself, by personal observation, that, in every respect, the workmen had rightly performed their duty. When the Penitentiary was opened, he remarked that the consumption of coal was extraordinary, and that, if continued, it would completely derange his calculations as to the means of its support. He immediately locked the coal-hole, put the key into his own pocket, and announced that, for some time to come, the supply of fuel was to be taken out and distributed by himself. For three entire days he tended the furnaces with his own hands; and meanwhile discovered that, through ignorance or negligence, there had previously been a most wasteful expenditure. Having taken effectual steps to correct the evil, he resigned his office in connexion with the coal department.

The Ulster Female Penitentiary was opened in August, 1839. At a public meeting held in Fisherwick Place Presbyterian Church, on the 14th of January following, it was stated that a committee had been appointed to devise some means of recording, in a permanent form, the debt of gratitude due to Dr. Edgar. The committee had decided that an *address*, containing a simple statement of facts, and exhibited in some public apartment of the Institution, would be

the most appropriate mode of accomplishing the object. The following document, then submitted to the meeting, was, accordingly, unanimously adopted :—

"*To the Rev. John Edgar, D.D., &c.*

"Rev. and Dear Sir, — We, Subscribers and Friends of the Ulster Female Penitentiary, beg leave to record our gratitude for your invaluable services to that Institution, and our admiration of the zeal, energy, and talent with which they have been performed.

"Twelve months ago, the affairs of the Penitentiary were in a most discouraging condition. One of the chief hindrances to its prosperity was, that its operations were carried on in a hired house, every way unsuited to the purposes of the Institution, and subject to a heavy rent. You animated and encouraged the Committee to the erection of a commodious building ; and although the work has been executed under their sanction and directions, yet they have cheerfully and gratefully acknowledged that almost the whole labour has been performed by you. The funds for the undertaking were raised entirely by your personal exertions, and you were yourself one of the largest contributors. The information which enabled the Committee to decide on a plan for the building, to choose the most suitable mode of warming and ventilating, to frame an improved system of general management, and, in particular, to perfect the management for the industrial department, was collected by you at an immense sacrifice of time and fatigue. After the most laborious

inquiries on these subjects at home, you undertook journeys to Dublin, Liverpool, and London for the express purpose of exploring the wider fields of experience which those cities afford. And, finally, during the whole period that the building has been in progress, you have superintended the work with as much vigilance, activity, and ardour as an enterprising and diligent man of business could have bestowed on his most important private concerns.

"While we give God all the glory of the signal success with which He has crowned this good work, we nevertheless feel that it is both natural and scriptural to express our esteem for the man, by whose instrumentality it has been achieved, and to tender him our warmest thanks for his devoted and persevering exertions.

"May God render this Institution the means of converting many souls, and long spare you to rejoice in its usefulness."

This address, engrossed on vellum, and subscribed by a large number of persons of high social standing and great moral worth, may still be seen in the Public Room of the Penitentiary.

Shortly after the opening of this Institution, a case possessing features of peculiar interest came before the committee. A lady of remarkable personal attractions, the mother of several children, and the wife of a highly respectable gentleman in the north of Ireland, had unhappily become acquainted with an Englishman of

rank and fortune, who induced her to desert her husband, and accompany him to his country-seat in south Britain. In a splendid mansion, and surrounded with all the luxuries of life, she remained for three or four years with her paramour; but at length she began to brood over her condition, and her agony became intolerable. She eventually resolved, at all hazards, to give up her sinful course, and betake herself to any asylum where she could earn an honest livelihood. She laid aside her rich attire; sealed up and left behind her a number of jewels presented to her by her companion in crime; and in very plain clothing found her way to Belfast. Arriving there on the morning of the day on which the Committee of the Penitentiary held a monthly meeting, she made an application for admission, which was immediately granted. In a short time, under the moral and religious training of the Institution, she gave evidence that she was the subject of a genuine work of grace. She performed all the menial services required with exemplary diligence; partook cheerfully of the very humble fare of the establishment; and for years conducted herself with the utmost propriety. Her husband eventually heard of her position; and, satisfied that she was a real penitent, received her back into his house. A case better fitted to illustrate the utility of the Penitentiary could not well be supplied.

Dr. Edgar regularly visited the Institution; engaged often with the inmates in religious exercises; and continued till his death an active member of the managing

committee. The first matron—who presided many years over the establishment—was remarkable for her discretion and Christian excellence. By her patience, firmness, good sense, and considerate kindness, Miss Burnside contrived to win the respect and affection of the inmates. The ready access afterwards obtained to the parish workhouse diminished, for several years, the number of the penitents; but, in Miss Burnside's time, upwards of forty women of the lowest grade—most of them picked up off the streets of Belfast—might have been seen living together in peace, and busily pursuing their industrial employments. To Dr. Edgar, who treated her with parental regard, Miss Burnside was much attached. At her death she bequeathed to him her savings, amounting to £200, to be devoted by him to such benevolent and religious objects as met his approval.

The most cheering results have flowed from the establishment of the Ulster Female Penitentiary. Not a few females have been reclaimed from the paths of infamy; twenty years after it was opened the managers could report that forty-seven of the inmates had meanwhile been restored to their families; others had been provided with situations and employment; and others again had been sent to America or Australia. "Victims of vice, apparently the most hopeless, are often," said Dr. Edgar, "entrusted to the care of the committee. Perverse are the tempers, outrageous the passions, confirmed the evil habits, and deep and dark the ignorance and vileness of not a few whom they

take in charge; but through all disappointments, and against all opposition, they go on calmly and steadily, knowing that success is in God's hand, the means they use His own, the influence of His truth all-powerful, reformation to come in His own way, at His own time, and that, in the humble, prayerful use of His own means, He will not let their labour be vain. They know it, and have often, to the joy of their heart, proved it. Here is a daughter restored to her parents, and there a wife to her husband—now a master, on his death-bed, leaves a legacy to the Institution because of the faithful Christian servant it gave him; and there a drunken husband reformed, rejoices in the wife the Penitentiary trained to be the means of his reformation." * When Dr. Edgar was in America, in 1859, he was delighted above measure by one of the incidents of his travel. He has himself thus described the adventure :—

"As I was hurrying to church one Sabbath morning, I had turned along a walk in a square, when a lady came rushing to me from another walk, seized me by the hand, and burst into tears. For a time she could not speak, but to a female acquaintance who asked her what ailed her, she said, 'Oh, I am crying for joy.' I looked on amazed, but when at length she asked, 'Do you not know me?' naming her name, I replied, 'Oh, yes, I do.' She told me her story, and afterwards called on me. She is so wise as to have kept her secret, and so shall I; but it betrays no trust

* Report of Ulster Female Penitentiary for 1862–3.

to tell that she was once an inmate in our female refuge, a poor lost one taken off the streets of Belfast, and she now holds, and long may she hold, a place of good salary and high respectability in a situation of public trust. A scene like this is worth, not an Atlantic voyage, but a lifetime's work. May it bear fruit in a land where there shall be no more sea!"

When the Penitentiary was opened, it was very much in want of funds; and as it was a public institution to which reclaimed females of all creeds and from all parts of Ulster were admitted, Dr. Edgar felt warranted in applying to Government for assistance. His first application met with a discouraging reception. In a letter, dated "Treasury Chambers, 18th September, 1840," he was informed that "Parliament, having voted the specific sums set forth in the miscellaneous estimates for the support of charitable institutions, the Lords Commissioners did not feel themselves justified in making any further grants, without the sanction of the House of Commons." Dr. Edgar did not, however, abandon hope. Having made known the claims of the Penitentiary to Lord Morpeth, then Chief Secretary for Ireland, his Lordship took a deep interest in the case; and, in consequence of his representations in high quarters, a grant of £300 was soon afterwards obtained. In the letter dated "Treasury, January 26th, 1841," conveying the intimation of this donation, it is stated that instructions had been received from Lord Melbourne to pay the amount "as of Her Majesty's Royal Bounty for the Ulster Female

Penitentiary." It would thus appear that the grant came from the royal purse.

To strangers Dr. Edgar often appeared to possess little power of observation, but those acquainted with him knew that he was remarkable for his quick and accurate appreciation of character. During his brief interviews with Lord Morpeth relative to the business of the Penitentiary, he was filled with admiration of the high intelligence and right feeling of that amiable and accomplished nobleman. Ever afterwards he honoured him as a statesman eminently worthy of support and confidence. At the general election in the summer of 1841, when his Lordship was driven by a not very creditable opposition from the representation of the West Riding of Yorkshire, Dr. Edgar felt the discomfiture as a personal calamity. In the ardour of his feelings he addressed the following communication to the defeated candidate :—

"My Lord,—As, unhappily for my poor country, your lordship is not likely to possess longer at present place and power, and therefore my motives are not likely to incur suspicion, I cannot refrain from saying that Ireland owes you a debt of gratitude which she never can repay; that Irish Presbyterians will be ungrateful indeed if they ever forget your kindness; and for myself, I shall ever look back with thankfulness and admiration to your most generous, friendly, and Christian deportment. Had you done nothing more than what you so nobly did on behalf of the Ulster

Female Penitentiary, every good man should regard you with admiration and love.

"But what especially impels me to occupy even a moment of your precious time now, is the extreme gratification with which I have contemplated your whole conduct in your late unsuccessful contest. There is associated with it as much true dignity, as much of high moral sublimity as could be attached to human conduct. It is a defeat worth a thousand victories. Your speech at the close of the election will be read by parents in the ears of their admiring posterity, and will wake up Christian sentiment and give a tone to the public mind long, long after Toryism, with all its condensed selfishness and all its evil influences, has been buried in the tyrant's grave.

"That you may long continue to hold forth, as you have so nobly done, the light of Christian charity, of Christian forgiveness, of Christian temper and magnanimity, and that your whole career may be as prosperous as its commencement has been great, is the earnest wish and prayer of your lordship's devoted servant,

"JOHN EDGAR."

His lordship was much touched by this unexpected and beautiful letter. Such a spontaneous expression of sentiment from a good and able man, in no way mixed up with the Yorkshire election, was particularly gratifying. He forthwith returned the subjoined reply.

"Dublin, July 27th, 1841.

"DEAR SIR,—Perhaps my protest against your over

favourable estimate of my proceedings might be too feebly expressed, so I will leave it alone; but I cannot refrain from sending this one line to assure you that of many kind and friendly things which have been said or written to me, none could have given me more real gratification than your letter. I feel that the Church of which you are an eminent member, holds a sort of middle and comparatively neutral ground in the great political and ecclesiastical contests of the day, and testimony of approval from such a quarter seems to me to bear great additional value. I wish you peace and prosperity with my whole heart.—I have the honour to be, dear Sir, your most obliged servant,

"MORPETH."

This incident appears to have made a lasting impression on the mind of Lord Morpeth. When in after life, as Earl of Carlisle, he filled for so many years the high office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he repeatedly signified very unequivocally his admiration of the character of Dr. Edgar. On a visit to Belfast in November, 1855, he says to him in a note written with his own hand, "I can only wish that my time could have enabled me to make better acquaintance with one so justly respected as yourself."

In the early part of the year 1841, Dr. Edgar was invited by the "London Society for the Protection of Young Females," to preach on behalf of their institution in the National Scotch Church, Regent Square. This spacious edifice had, not many years before, been

the scene of the ministrations of the Rev. Edward Irving; and, within its walls, that celebrated man had often addressed immense congregations comprising not a few of the *elite* of the British aristocracy. The discourse delivered there by Dr. Edgar, entitled, "The Penitent Restored," was published by request, and dedicated, by permission, to His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge. It treats of the statistics, evils, and cure of prostitution, and gives a complete view of the penitentiary system. The author supplies much important information on the subject, and shows how carefully he had studied its various departments. In the following passage he sums up the advantages of the course of treatment he recommends:—

"I take for granted, that each penitentiary, like ours for Ulster, is under the charge of a pious, wise matron, and a zealous female committee, who love their Redeemer; that there is a probationary ward and a proper system of religious education; and that each inmate has a separate bedroom, where, with the Bible as her companion, she can enjoy opportunity for solemn reflection and prayer.

"Such an institution exactly meets the necessities, and all the necessities of the whole class. They were naked, or clothed with tawdry finery, which belonged to those who traded in their souls; this institution clothes them in the neat and tasteful apparel of virtue. They were starving, or were rioting on the maddening luxuries which gluttony and drunkenness drew from the wages of shame; this institution supplies them

abundantly with wholesome, temperate fare. Nine-tenths of them were living in idleness, and laziness was a chief cause of their ruin; this institution affords them suitable and pleasant employment, engages their minds in interesting pursuits, teaches them habits of industry, enables them to contribute largely to their own support, and fits them for situations of usefulness and comfort in after life. They were grossly ignorant —a fearful proportion of them being unable to read, and the reading of others being confined chiefly to absurd and maddening romance;* this institution is to them a school, a school of moral and mental discipline, where God's blessed Bible is the school-book, and the lessons learned are lessons of heavenly wisdom. They were shut out of the sanctuary by public indignation, or by deep remorse. 'I dared not pray,' said one of them to me, who is a fine, reformed girl now, 'I dared not pray, for how did I know but God might strike me dead?' but this institution opens for them the gates of prayer; it teaches them that truth which converts, and sanctifies, and saves; it proclaims to them that Gospel, which is the power of God and wisdom of God to every one who believes; and, in addition to all this, it concentrates these blessings in the charmed circle of a Christian family and a Christian home. These poor prodigals have come home to a mother in Israel; they have found once more the

* The prostitutes of Edinburgh are exceptions; for, according to the statements of Mr. Tait, not more than thirteen or fourteen per cent. of them all are unable to read.

joys of a household hearth; and, away from the voice of blasphemy, and the shouts of revelry and riot—away from wicked companions and corrupting influence—a Sabbath shines for them once more, and they enjoy domestic peace and sweet fellowship with those who are sisters of Jesus; under the influence of whose pure precept, and spotless lives, they will be won by their chaste conversation, coupled with fear."

On various subsequent occasions Dr. Edgar returned to the same theme. In 1851, he published "A Statement submitted to the Supporters of the Ulster Female Penitentiary;" and, frequently afterwards, prepared reports and appeals for circulation among the friends of the Institution. At the meeting of the British Association held in Belfast, in September, 1852, he read a paper entitled, "The Dangerous and Perishing Classes," in which he notices the subject of prostitution in connexion with other topics of a kindred description.

CHAPTER VII.

DR. EDGAR MODERATOR OF THE IRISH GENERAL ASSEMBLY—BI-CENTENARY OF IRISH PRESBYTERIANISM—THE BI-CENTENARY FUND—BI-CENTENARY OF WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY—CORRESPONDENCE WITH A UNITARIAN MINISTER—ABUSES OF EPISCOPAL COURTS—HISTORY OF THESE COURTS—PRESBYTERIAN MARRIAGES—THE GREYABBEY CASE—DISRUPTION OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND—A BELFAST M.P.—SYMPATHY WITH THE FREE CHURCH.

T its third annual meeting in 1842, Dr. Edgar was unanimously chosen Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. His year of office was celebrated as the Bi-centenary of Irish Presbyterianism. Some members of the Church of Scotland had, indeed, settled in Ireland in the latter part of the sixteenth century; and Walter Travers, the first regular Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, was a zealous Presbyterian. Edward Brice, who became minister of Broadisland, near Carrickfergus, in 1613, was connected with the Scottish Establishment, and distinguished by his uncompromising hostility to prelacy. Robert Cunningham, Robert Blair, Josias Welsh, and others who were located shortly afterwards in Down and Antrim, were men of the same stamp. But the first Irish Presbytery was

constituted at Carrickfergus in the summer of 1642; and from this date the Bi-centenary was calculated. The Church had meanwhile increased from five ministers to between four and five hundred; and the Assembly proposed to express gratitude to God, at the commencement of the third centenary, by the establishment of a fund to be devoted to the benefit of Roman Catholic Ireland. Part of the money was to be employed in the support of preaching; part in the maintenance of schools; and part in promoting the erection of houses of worship. In a short time, the members of Assembly themselves, out of their slender means, gave donations amounting to £2000, of which the Moderator contributed £60. Dr. Edgar's congregation also set a noble example. Though comparatively small—amounting to about 180 families—and though almost all its members were in humble circumstances, it at once raised £350. Dr. Edgar engaged with his whole heart in the collection of the fund; and by speeches, private letters, communications in the newspapers, and other appliances, sought to add to its amount. His published appeals on its behalf, written in his capacity of Moderator of Assembly, are full of eloquence and enthusiasm. "Beloved brethren," said he, "it is my earnest desire that in this great Bi-centenary year of Presbyterianism in Ireland, one unanimous, overwhelming feeling of gratitude to Almighty God, and of joy in His unspeakable mercies, shall pervade our Church in all its borders. My fervent prayer to the Father of mercies is, that, under the

influence of His Spirit, there may be among us, this year, such a dedication of heart, and property, and labour, to His glory, as may make it memorable in all future time, and send down a sacred influence to remotest generations. What a commanding and noble position does the Irish Presbyterian Church at present occupy! The eyes of all Christendom are on her; clouds of witnesses are round her; her ministers are of one heart and one mind; her people are showing how lovely and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. Is there, then, a man holding the Presbyterian name—a name honourable above all that heraldry can boast—is there a member of the poorest Presbyterian household—who will not press forward to the honour and happiness of the great effort now to be made on behalf of our poor yet loved country, and for our dear Redeemer's glory? Happy are the revered patriarchs who have lived to see the glories of such a year; and happy are their children, to set out in life with the holy impulse, and elevating recollections, and high standard of Christian worth, which this Bi-centenary year will give. Now that the Presbyterian ministers have done their part well, and stepped nobly forth to lead the public mind, I have every confidence in the Presbyterian people. I saw them tried in my father's days, and I have seen them in my own. The piety which lived and glowed, in spite of a Mary, and James, and Charles, lives still in the descendants of those who, for Christ's Crown and Covenant, jeopardised their lives in the high places of the field; and

where genuine piety lives, and Christ's ministers do their part aright, there is no fear that God's work will flag for want of men or means to carry it forward."

In the end, the fund amounted to nearly £14,000 —by far the largest sum that had ever then been given by the Irish Presbyterian Church for any purpose.

In 1843 the Bi-centenary of the famous Assembly of Divines at Westminster was celebrated by Presbyterians in England, Scotland, and Ireland. At a public meeting held on the occasion in Belfast, Dr. Edgar made a speech which gave rise to considerable criticism. A Unitarian minister of the town had, shortly before, in a published discourse, assailed the reputation of the Westminster Synod; and the address of the Professor of Theology, at the time of the commemoration, was intended partly as a reply to this attack. Some of his language was misinterpreted; and a long correspondence followed which eventually found its way into the newspapers, and which, to a certain extent, was a reproduction, on a small scale, of the old controversy between Trinitarianism and heterodoxy. The publication of the letters supplied an excellent illustration of the folly of cherishing a suspicious disposition. Dr. Edgar had indulged in some rather coarse ridicule when referring to the declining numbers of Unitarians. "Poor old fellows!" said he "they are on their last legs, bandaged, and gouty, and rickety; their ranks are thinning fast; and when one lies down to die, *there are not enough remaining of his own party to bury him.*" The father of the Belfast

Controversialist—one of the most respectable ministers of the Unitarian party—had died not long before; and though his remains had been followed to the grave by a large company of mourners, the son perversely imagined that the words just quoted contained an unkind allusion to the funeral. Dr. Edgar, who had been from home for several weeks, knew nothing of its history; but his observation, intended by him merely as a piece of sarcasm, had been differently interpreted; and his Unitarian neighbour, by his readiness to take offence, contrived to spread far and wide a false impression as to the attendance at the burial.

As early as 1843 Dr. Edgar directed the attention of the Legislature to the abuses of the ecclesiastical courts. In the spring of that year, as Moderator of Assembly, he forwarded petitions to the Lords and Commons, stating the grievances connected with these judicatories, and praying Parliament to pass some measure whereby questions "hitherto referred to such courts, be placed under the adjudication of a civil court; that the cognisance of all offences injurious to character or reputation, or in themselves criminal, or subversive of social order, be left entirely to common law, or provided for by such statutory enactments as may from time to time be deemed expedient; that petitioner, and all persons not members of the Established Church of England and Ireland, be exempted from the infliction of church censures by any of its ecclesiastical courts; and that the jurisdiction of all ecclesiastical courts, in granting probates of wills, or

letters of administration to intestate estates, be henceforth transferred to some civil tribunal, duly constituted, with all necessary powers in that behalf, giving reasonable compensation to all functionaries who may, in consequence, be deprived of any source of emolument."

The spiritual courts present a strange anomaly in connection with the British constitution. Originating far back in ages when Church and State were identified, and when bishops were permitted to wield a large amount of secular power, they were not swept away along with other grievances which disappeared at the time of the Reformation. The bishops claimed jurisdiction, not only in all cases of individuals charged with the commission of what were very vaguely designated spiritual offences, but also in all questions relating to marriage and divorce, to sepulture, to the administration of wills, and to the distribution of the property of deceased persons. The variety of ecclesiastical courts is sufficiently perplexing. There are Provincial and Diocesan Courts, Archdiaconal Courts, Courts of Peculiars, Royal Peculiars, Manorial Peculiars, and many others. Employment is here found for a whole throng of officials, under the titles of Proctors, Registrars, Vicars-General, Judges, Surrogates, and so forth. The members of the episcopal order have long contrived to make provision for children or other relatives, by giving them places in these courts spiritual. And the character of some of the appointments has certainly not been very credit-

able to those entrusted with such valuable patronage. "In 1769," says Dr. Edgar in one of his tracts on this subject, "the Bishop of Chester appointed as principal Registrar of his diocese—worth £4,000 a-year—his son, a boy of fourteen at school; and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners found him sitting snug and warm in the berth at the end of sixty-one years. Brownlow North was appointed, by his bishop, Registrar of Winchester, when he was about twelve years of age. The Registrar of the Prerogative Court of York tells the Commissioners honestly that, when a minor, he was appointed by the bishop, his father, in conjunction with his nephew, also a minor. These two have a double inheritance of the church, worth, in 1829, £2,381. Happy, happy, happy pair! but not so happy after all as the trio of the Moores, appointed by their dearly-beloved relative Dr. Moore, Archbishop of Canterbury, to three principal Registrarships worth £8,793, which, for ornament, not for use, they held some forty years, the duties being performed by deputy."

If the powers of these courts were confined to members of the Established Church of England and Ireland, and if Episcopalians were satisfied with their proceedings, there would be little reason to complain; but the crying evil is that the officials of one sect can thus annoy, distress, or ruin individuals of all other denominations. Nor have these sectarian institutions permitted their authority to remain in abeyance. In England, as well as in Ireland, from time immemorial,

they have proved exceedingly vexatious to Nonconformists. In 1840—only three years before the time when Dr. Edgar forwarded his petition to the legislature praying for their abolition—a judgment delivered by Dr. George Miller, Principal Surrogate in the Consistorial Court of Armagh, had roused the indignation of Irish Presbyterians. A marriage between a Presbyterian and a member of another church, solemnised by a Presbyterian minister, had long been deemed binding; and the judges on circuit had again and again affirmed its validity; but, in a disputed case relative to the right of administration to the property of a person deceased, Dr. Miller, basing his judgment on a Saxon canon of the tenth century—to be found in a few rare books such as Sir Henry Spelman's Treatise *De Conciliis*—had pronounced the contract null and void. According to this antiquated regulation, the presence of "a priest" is required to constitute a valid marriage; and as a Presbyterian pastor is not Episcopally ordained, Dr. Miller declared him incompetent to celebrate the ordinance. The judgment soon became known, and shook the confidence entertained in preceding decisions. Shortly afterwards, a man indicted for bigamy pleaded, through his counsel, that the charge could not be sustained; for, though it was admitted that he had previously been united in wedlock by a Presbyterian minister, it was argued that such a contract was no marriage at all. A special verdict was, in consequence, returned; and the question was referred to the determination of

the Irish judges. When the case came before them in the Court of Queen's Bench, their opinions were divided: but, by a majority of one, a decision was given in favour of the views of Dr. Miller. It was, however, considered at the time by many persons of the highest intelligence that, had the votes of the Irish judges been weighed, not numbered, the preponderance of ability and skill would have been found in the Presbyterian balance. Their decision was brought, by Writ of Error, before the House of Lords. Lords Brougham, Campbell, and Denman, pleaded strongly for reversing it; but as Lords Abinger, Cottenham, and the Lord Chancellor—the other three law Lords who gave their judgments—were of an opposite opinion, their votes were equally balanced; and, according to the rule in such cases, the decision of the Irish Court of Queen's Bench was affirmed, and the prisoner acquitted. Thus, though the general question was still left open to future discussion, the ecclesiastical award of the Surrogate of the Consistorial Court of Armagh had meanwhile issued in releasing a bigamist, in disturbing a whole province, and in supplying a bone of contention to the highest expounders of the law. Society in Ulster was threatened with disorganisation; many children, hitherto regarded as born in lawful wedlock, were branded with a stigma of infamy; and the title to a large amount of property was imperilled, if not destroyed. The Legislature was soon obliged to interfere and redress the wrong, generated

by the ecclesiastical tribunal. Existing marriages were legalised, and marriages thereafter celebrated by a Presbyterian minister between a Presbyterian and an individual of another denomination were declared valid.

A paltry dispute which occurred several years afterwards in in the County of Down, and which involved a Presbyterian minister and some members of his congregation in heavy costs, illustrates still farther the monstrous oppression of these ecclesiastical courts. The Episcopal Incumbent of Greyabbey had given offence to a large portion of the inhabitants of the district by what they considered an unwarrantable interference with the parochial burying-ground; and, in consequence, at the annual vestry meeting, some dissatisfaction was manifested. At the close of the other proceedings, the Rev. David Jeffrey, the Presbyterian minister of the place, was moved into the chair; and some resolutions, of which the incumbent disapproved, were proposed and adopted. Mr. Jeffrey, who is known to be singularly unobtrusive and good natured, took the chair with reluctance, and merely because he did not wish, by his refusal, to disoblige those assembled at the vestry meeting. Good sense might have taught the Episcopal clergyman the propriety of passing over the matter without farther notice, as the whole affair was of a very harmless character, and would soon have been forgotten. But the reverend gentleman contrived, by the aid of an ecclesiastical tribunal, to increase the bad feeling in the neighbourhood, and to

draw the attention of the whole kingdom to the transaction. Proceeding in the Consistorial Court of Down against Mr. Jeffrey and two members of his congregation, he convicted them of the ecclesiastical offence of "brawling in a church." The word "brawling," employed in the process, was not, as it appeared, "used in its ordinary sense as followed in a dictionary,"* but meant "the use of violent and abusive language," which, if uttered elsewhere than on holy ground, "would not have been punishable at all." The entire gist of the offence lay in the place where it was committed, though it occurred on an ordinary week day, and not during the time of divine service. It could be justified by "no amount of provocation—no invasion of rights, real or imaginary." The proceedings extended over a period of sixteen months; the depositions occupied about 900 folio pages, and the document, in which they were embodied, weighed upwards of forty pounds avoirdupois! No less than five weeks were spent in the examination of one class of witnesses. The Incumbent succeeded in mulcting Mr. Jeffrey and his friends in costs amounting to about £700. Unable to meet such crushing expenses, the minister of Greyabbey has now been for years in constant peril of imprisonment. On the part of those who set on foot the prosecution, it is believed that prudential considerations alone have prevented his incarceration.

Dr. Edgar marked attentively this new development

* The words marked by inverted commas are taken from the judgment of the Vicar-General.

of the iniquitous character of these ecclesiastical courts. Even according to the confession of the Vicar-General who tried the case, the Incumbent had acted "indiscreetly;" for his dictatorial bearing at the vestry had led to what had occurred. Had such an affair been brought before a bench of magistrates assembled at petty sessions, they might perhaps have exhorted the Episcopal minister to act with a little more prudence and forbearance; and, as no breach of the peace had been committed, they might then have dismissed the case. Or had they ascertained that the parishioners had transgressed the law by speaking in the church after the dismission of the vestry, they might have considered a fine of a few pence or a few shillings a sufficient satisfaction. They could not have regarded the matter as anything more than a trivial misdemeanor; and to involve a few men, in humble circumstances, in a penalty of £700 for what was at most but a breach of decorum, was an enormity which, in the nineteenth century, and under the shadow of the British Constitution, a bishop's court alone would have dared to perpetrate. Dr. Edgar assisted in raising money to defray the expenses incurred by the parties in self-defence, and also called public attention to the nature of the tribunal from which they had suffered so grievously. Two of his tracts, entitled "History and Character of the Ecclesiastical Courts," and "Abolition of the Ecclesiastical Courts," relate to this transaction.

Dr. Edgar's period of office as Moderator of the Irish General Assembly was, in many respects, an

eventful year. The Non-intrusion controversy had long convulsed the Established Church of Scotland; and in 1843 it was brought to a close by the Disruption. In the month of February preceding, a special meeting of the Irish General Assembly was convened —partly to consider the question of Presbyterian marriages as affected by Dr. Miller's recent decision— partly to give an impetus to the collection of the Bi-centenary Fund—and partly to express sympathy with the Scottish Non-intrusionists in their struggles for ecclesiastical freedom. Some still living will never forget the prayer offered up by the Moderator at the opening of that meeting. In the beauty of its phraseology, in the sublimity of its thought, in the pertinency of its confessions and petitions, and in the fervour of its devotional feeling, it was a choice specimen of Presbyterian worship. The proceedings were harmonious; and the Assembly did its utmost to strengthen the hands of the opponents of patronage. About six weeks afterwards, a great meeting of the Presbyterians of Belfast was held in Rosemary Street Church to enlist public sentiment on the side of the Non-intrusionists. One of the representatives of the borough, pledged to aid them in his place in Parliament, had deserted them in their hour of need; and had then sent a long letter to the newspapers giving a sophistical explanation of his policy. Such, however, was the excited state of feeling among the political adherents of the honourable gentleman that, though his tergiversation was notorious, almost every one was

unwilling publicly to appear as his accuser. It was admitted, at the same time, that the Rosemary Street demonstration would have little significance if his glaring dereliction of duty were overlooked. Dr. Edgar undertook the invidious task of censor; and with a boldness which delighted honest men and awed even trimmers into silence, delivered a scathing protest against the conduct of the delinquent Senator. After reading to the vast auditory a letter from Mr. D. R. Ross, one of the representatives of Belfast, who had faithfully fulfilled his engagements, and to whom, as Moderator, he had addressed a communication thanking him for his services, Dr. Edgar thus proceeded: "As to our other member, I will only say, I wrote him no letter, and I received none: but you have all seen a very long one from him, defending his conduct, and have formed your own opinion. Those who sent him to Parliament, of whom I am not one, will of course deal with him according to his deserts. This is not a political meeting; and I have no authority for discussing his case; but as a Christian minister, as a brother to faithful ministers persecuted for righteousness' sake, and as upholding the sacred cause of religious liberty, I would be dishonouring this meeting, and giving great offence to the whole body of honest Presbyterians, did I not say that his vote on Mr. Fox Maule's motion* deserves the strongest disapprobation—that

* Early in 1843 Mr. Fox Maule, now Earl of Dalhousie, made a motion in the House of Commons with a view to deliver the Non-Intrusionists from their difficulties. This motion was rejected, and the Disruption soon afterwards followed.

his explanation is only an aggravation of his offence, and that his violation of repeated solemn pledges renders him, as a public man, utterly unworthy of the confidence of a Presbyterian people." There is something which compels admiration in the manly utterance of dangerous truth; and these words had not well passed from the lips of the speaker, when they were responded to by thunders of applause which shook the great building to its very foundations.

As an old Seceder, Dr. Edgar at first was not prepared to sympathise so deeply as some others with the Non-Intrusionists. Remembering what the Erskines and Fishers of former times had suffered from it, he looked with little favour on the Scottish Establishment. But when he saw that the Reformers were thoroughly in earnest, he entered with his whole heart into their cause, and gave them all the assistance he could possibly render. Immediately after the Disruption he used his utmost influence to procure for them pecuniary aid, and put down his own name for the generous donation of £60.

CHAPTER VIII.

BELFAST TOWN MISSION—WILLIAM COCHRANE—NEW TOWN MISSION—INSTITUTION FOR THE DEAF AND DUMB AND THE BLIND—WILLIAM M'COMB, ESQ.—THE MESSRS. SHAW—MARQUIS OF DOWNSHIRE—SEAMAN'S FRIEND SOCIETY—SINCLAIR SEAMAN'S CHURCH—CHURCH AND MANSE SCHEME—REV. DAVID HAMILTON — DR. EDGAR RESIGNS HIS PASTORAL CHARGE, AND IS SUCCEEDED BY THE REV. GEORGE SHAW—PRESENTATION OF DR. EDGAR'S PORTRAIT TO MRS. EDGAR—THE PRIEST'S CURSE.

N 1843 the Belfast Town Mission, in connexion with the General Assembly, was established. Without some such agency, provision cannot well be made for the spiritual oversight of multitudes living, in a large town, in the neglect of divine ordinances. The time of the ministers is completely occupied with the duties they are bound to perform to their own congregations, as well as with attendance on the various committees and public meetings at which they are expected to be present. The whole town of Belfast is divided by the Mission into so many districts; to every district a missionary is assigned; and this evangelist is required to look after all the individuals in that locality who frequent no place of worship. A town mission was instituted

in the capital of Ulster about forty years ago. Its first agent was William Cochrane, an eminently gifted and pious man from the neighbourhood of Lisburn, who had been brought to a saving knowledge of the truth under the ministry of the Rev. James Morgan. Mr. Cochrane anticipated his spiritual father in his removal to Belfast. He commenced his labours as a town missionary about a year before Mr. Morgan took charge of the newly-erected congregation of Fisherwick Place.

The Town Mission was not originally connected with any particular denomination. Its early agents were two or three pious laymen of very limited education. Any mission of the kind, superintended by ministers and members of different churches, always labours under special disadvantages; for sectarian jealousies, to some extent, cramp its energies, and interfere with its unity of action. The union between the Secession and the Synod of Ulster placed the Presbyterians of Belfast in a more influential position; they could now act together; and, as they constituted by far the larger part of the supporters of the Old Town Mission, they thought it better to set up a new and more extensive agency to be managed entirely by themselves. There are at present connected with this mission thirteen agents, all of whom are licentiates of the Assembly, or students who have nearly completed their theological course. Four or five of the existing congregations of Belfast have been collected by this instrumentality. Dr. Edgar was at first one of the

joint-secretaries of the mission; and, for several years, much of his time was devoted to its superintendence.

Among the other institutions of Belfast to which he rendered important aid may be mentioned the Establishment for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind. From the beginning, he was a most useful and influential member of its committee. Dr. Orpen, of Dublin, was the first who called attention to the unhappy condition of the deaf mutes of Ireland; and the building at Claremont, erected almost entirely by his own exertions, was, for years, the only place in the country where they could obtain education. For a time the good people of the north were satisfied with raising funds to maintain pupils at Claremont. In 1831, a day school for their instruction was opened in the retiring room of the Independent Chapel, Donegall Street, Belfast. A dwelling-house in King Street was subsequently rented, and a boarding establishment, on a small scale, provided. Meanwhile, the claims of the blind were urgently pressed on public notice. William M'Comb, Esq., was the first in Belfast who taught them to read by means of raised characters; and his labours for their benefit, in the way of Sabbath-school instruction, were singularly blessed. Nor is this the only service which Mr. M'Comb rendered to this good cause; for the Christian poet awoke his muse, and sung in such plaintive strains of the sorrows of the blind that many hearts were moved more deeply to pity their destitution. The project of erecting a building for the instruction of the blind created con-

siderable discussion; but the difficulty of procuring funds appeared so formidable that nothing was immediately attempted. At the same time the Belfast Deaf and Dumb Institution languished; and the committee were thrown into much perplexity. In an address delivered in November, 1837, at a public meeting in Rosemary Street Presbyterian Church—the Earl of Roden in the chair—Dr. Edgar relates the result. "The proposal was made," says he, "that as there was no provision in Belfast for the destitute blind, and as it would be unwise to add another to the many benevolent institutions appealing to public charity, we should take them under our charge. However absurd it might seem in us to enlarge our sphere, who had occupied so inefficiently the ground we had chosen, nevertheless we accepted the proposal, and from that hour we prospered. An appeal on behalf of the blind poor was inserted in the newspapers, which awakened a very strong interest; and well it might—for the facts to which it referred were not only most deeply distressing, but were such as every person felt most deeply to concern himself. The appeal was made to those who knew that the musical attainments by which the destitute blind obtain a precarious livelihood, whether at the splendid ball of the great, or the vulgar dance of the vile, too often become a means of bringing themselves and tempting others to a common destruction. An appeal was made in a district where a short time previously two poor blind fiddlers, returning from a whisky dance, perished in the same ditch. Encou-

raged by the ardour so extensively and publicly manifested, it was immediately resolved to erect buildings suitable to the noble undertaking proposed, of educating in the same institution the deaf and dumb and the blind; and an application having been made to the committee of the Belfast Charitable Society, they generously granted for the purpose a suitable site. Of the cordiality and generosity with which our application for the necessary funds was everywhere received, we speak in terms of the warmest admiration and gratitude; friends of humanity connected with many religious denominations, have enabled us to erect buildings, containing suitable schoolrooms, workshops, a dwelling-house for the master, and suitable accommodation for fifty boarders."

This building, erected in College Street in 1835, at an expense of £1000, was in a few years found to be totally incapable of meeting the increasing demands for admission. The committee were again obliged to consider the propriety of obtaining additional accommodation; they resolved to raise a larger structure in a more suitable locality; and the spacious and beautiful edifice on the Old Lisburn Road, now known as the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind, is the fruit of their exertions.

There are persons who appear to be attracted with special power towards certain spheres of benevolence; and a peculiarly strong sympathy for particular classes of the afflicted may sometimes be traced in households, as well as in individuals. One respectable family

connected with the north of Ireland has been signalised by distinguished services rendered to the deaf and dumb. Dr. Orpen originally contemplated only the education of adult deaf mutes. Edward Shaw, Esq., a gentleman of high Christian character resident in Dublin, was the first to suggest to him the propriety of including children within the circle of his benevolent exertions. The result justified the wisdom of his advice; for the juvenile branch soon became by far the more important department of the Claremont Institution. William Shaw, Esq.—now of New York—the worthy son of a worthy father—was for years secretary of the Dublin Juvenile Institution for the Deaf and Dumb. When the family removed to the north of Ireland they continued to cultivate the same field of philanthropic labour; and to James Shaw, Esq., its able and indefatigable secretary, the Ulster Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind is largely indebted for its present prosperity. When the insufficiency of the accommodation furnished by the Institution in College Street forced itself on the attention of the committee, Mr. Shaw invited to his house a number of friends interested in the object, that they might privately discuss the expediency of undertaking the erection of more extensive buildings. Dr. Edgar was one of the party; and, in a speech delivered soon afterwards at the annual meeting, he gave the following somewhat humorous account of their deliberations. "I am," said he, "thrust forward as a pioneer before the regular forces to move the printing of the report,

and draw particular attention to the proposal of building a suitable Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind. Little did we know of public generosity, and less by far of the extent of the evil which we proposed to remedy when we imagined that on such a pocket-handkerchief-breadth as that which we occupy, we would be able to meet the wants and act worthy of the benevolence of Ulster. God put it into the hearts of good men of the Poor House Committee—some of whom are now in glory—to make us a generous grant of ground in the days of our infancy and poverty. On that ground we have flourished and prospered; and now when to the successors of these men we come, as the children of Joseph came to Joshua, saying, 'Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto?' these same successors are so bound up by Acts of Parliament that, with every feeling of goodwill towards us, they are compelled to answer us as Joshua did the children of Joseph: 'If thou be a great people, then get up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there, if Mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.' Some dozen or two of us assembled the other evening round our secretary's tea-table, and after being pretty considerably elevated by his best gunpowder, we came manfully and unanimously to the resolve that £4000 should be raised forthwith, and a new Institution built for the deaf and dumb and the blind. We appear here before you to-day, pledged men—pledged in

God's strength—to raise £4000 for a new Institution, and what, I ask fearlessly, is there to hinder us to redeem our pledge? Nothing, most assuredly."

Some of the committee thought that the attempt to raise £4000 for the building of the new establishment was quite too bold an enterprise, and looked forward, with no little anxiety, to the responsibility it involved. The most sanguine had, probably, some misgivings; and all admitted, that if the amount could be realized, after years of exertion, there would be much cause for congratulation. Though soon convinced that the cost of a suitable edifice would far exceed the outlay contemplated, they did not give up the undertaking in despair. Confident in the goodness of their cause, they resolved to go forward, and, in the end, were nobly sustained by the generosity of the Christian public. The whole expense, amounting to £12,000, has been long since discharged. Dr. Edgar contributed handsomely, and exerted himself much to procure subscriptions from others.

The Ulster Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and the Blind is founded on truly catholic principles. Evangelical ministers of all denominations can meet together on its platform, and cordially co-operate in advocating its claims. Shortly after the new establishment was opened, certain parties, more remarkable for zeal than discretion, gave considerable annoyance to its friends by preferring a number of frivolous charges against some of its officials, and by attempting to fasten on it the imputation of sectarianism. The Marquis of

Downshire happened to preside at the annual meeting when the complainants appeared, and rendered good service by his tact, prudence, and decision. Dr. Edgar, in particular—who had been long well known to his lordship—was greatly pleased with the result, and felt it his duty to address a communication, in his own name, to the noble chairman, thanking him for his impartiality and firmness. The Marquis was much gratified by this tribute of approval, and returned an answer which does him honour.

"Hillsborough, Dec. 30th, 1848.

"My dear Sir,—I am sorry that my absence at Hilltown on business, and return late last night, prevented my answering yours of Thursday, the 28th, sooner. I should be doing both you and myself a great injustice were I not instantly to thank you most sincerely for the handsome and straightforward terms in which your letter is couched, and to thank you, moreover, for continuing the friendship you held for my father to me.

"Nothing is so grateful to me as the unsolicited praise of those older than myself; nothing should be set more store by than the good wishes of a clergyman who has been so long notorious for good as yourself; and nothing should be more carefully aimed at by a young man like myself, occupying a trying position in the world, than a firm and invincible determination to act in an honest, impartial, and even handed manner. In the case of the meeting on Thursday, I am glad to

find it your opinion that I have been of use. My course was clear enough. I knew nothing of the controverted points except the *fact* that there was a division in the camp. I therefore determined to listen and decide for myself. I soon found that, be the allegations true or false (and I saw they were frivolous), the committee were most anxious to show fair play. . . In short, the whole wrangle was childish and impotent, and I nearly lost my temper in keeping down the church militant! I think, however, that the accusation and explanation must do good, and I hope the Institution will go on stronger than ever. . . . . .

"I have troubled you at greater length than I intended, and will only add that I shall always be happy for your friendship and regard.—Wishing you many happy returns of the season, believe me, my dear Sir, very truly yours,

"DOWNSHIRE.

"The Rev. Dr. Edgar, Belfast."

The Seaman's Friend Society was another institution to which Dr. Edgar rendered important services. Though Belfast has been long a flourishing commercial port, until a comparatively recent date no distinct agency, charged with the spiritual supervision of its sailors, was in existence. At length some merchants and others became impressed with the importance of the object, and the Seamen's Friend Society was commenced. For several years Dr. Edgar prepared its annual reports, and otherwise contributed to promote

its efficiency. It employed a missionary, whose duty it was to look after the religious interests of the seafaring men frequenting the harbour; to visit the crews of the various vessels; to distribute Bibles and tracts; and to preach either on board ship or on the quay as he had opportunity. A chapel was fitted up in Pilot Street, where public worship was regularly maintained, and where a Sabbath School was established. For a time Presbyterians and Episcopalians co-operated in supporting the society; but the arrangement proved somewhat inconvenient, and they at length parted by mutual consent. In 1856 the magnificent Seamen's Church, intended to commemorate the public usefulness of the late John Sinclair, Esq., and bearing his surname, was erected on the part of the Presbyterians.

The completion of "Sinclair's Seamen's Church" was hailed with singular satisfaction by Dr. Edgar. He had long hoped to see such a place of worship provided for the accommodation of mariners and their families; and he was delighted to think that a desire to honour the memory of one of his most valued friends had stimulated its erection. The Seamen's Church was a fitting recognition of the worth of Mr. John Sinclair. Possessed of great energy and enterprise, he did not neglect, as a successful merchant, to honour the Lord with the first-fruits of all his increase. The firm of which he was the senior partner owned a large mercantile navy, and had long evinced a deep interest in the spiritual well-being of sailors. Every scheme of public benevolence had also been aided by its princely muni-

ficence. The Irish Presbyterian Church has been more indebted to the Messrs. Sinclair, for raising the standard of liberality, than perhaps to any other name ever connected with its communion.

As it is impossible, in a Memoir such as this, to observe any strict chronological arrangement in the narrative, another benevolent undertaking in which Dr. Edgar was interested may here be mentioned. The original Church and Manse Scheme of the Irish General Assembly* received his zealous support. In a poor rural district the erection of a house of worship is a formidable enterprise; and the plan formerly employed to obtain funds was, for various reasons, extremely objectionable. The minister was sent abroad to cities and towns to seek assistance; he was sometimes months from home; his congregation was meanwhile neglected; and he was himself exposed to repulses and indignities sufficient to crush the spirit of a man of sensitive disposition. The house of worship, when built, was often clumsy or inconvenient; and not unfrequently erected on a site to which the congregation had no legal title. Twenty years ago a manse was seldom found connected with an Irish Presbyterian Church; and a minister, newly settled, was sometimes involved in much expense before he could obtain the shelter of a suitable dwelling-house. The Church and Manse Scheme was intended to put an end to clerical mendicancy—to provide a Fund

* The idea of a Manse Scheme was mooted in 1840; but no decided steps were taken for its establishment until 1852.

from which congregations anxious to build churches and manses could obtain aid—and to place under the supervision of a general committee all matters relating to tenures and style of architecture. When the project was broached it was suggested that the sum of £5000 should, if possible, be collected. "Not £5000," said Mr. John Sinclair, "but £25,000." He added that, if his idea were adopted, his own firm would be forthcoming for £1000. This offer settled the question. Others were stirred up to imitate this large-hearted generosity; and the sum eventually collected exceeded even the required estimate — amounting, with interest, to upwards of £30,000.

Dr. Edgar did much to promote the success of this scheme, and was indefatigable as a member of the General Committee. But the name of another minister, who several years ago finished his earthly career, should ever be mentioned with double honour in connexion with the Church and Manse Fund. The Rev. David Hamilton, of York Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast, was one of the holiest men and most efficient pastors of the General Assembly. Though possessed of neither brilliant talents nor extensive learning, he was a true evangelist—a most acceptable and edifying preacher. His piety shone through all his actions, and imparted peculiar unction and impressiveness to all his ministrations. As Convener of the Church and Manse Committee, he laboured with extraordinary industry—visiting congregations all over the country to point out to them the importance of

the undertaking, and putting into requisition all legitimate agencies to stimulate generosity. His exertions were crowned with success; not a few churches were relieved of debt; and nearly two hundred new manses —in perpetuity and at a nominal rent—have at once diminished the expenditure and increased the comfort of as many ministers.

In the spring of 1846 the Parliamentary provision for the four theological Professors of the General Assembly was increased to £250 per annum for each.* It had long been thought desirable that the occupant of the Chair of Systematic Divinity should not have the care of a congregation; but the want of anything like an adequate maintenance had hitherto prevented a more satisfactory arrangement. The augmentation of the Parliamentary grant removed the difficulty; and accordingly, in the spring of 1848, Dr. Edgar resigned the charge of the church of Alfred Street. The Rev. George Shaw was selected to fill his place, and the choice had the full approbation of the retired pastor. Dr. Edgar was much pleased with the idea that his successor was the friend and correspondent of one of the most gifted and saintly ministers of modern times —the Rev. Robert M'Cheyne of Dundee. Though no longer the regular pastor, he did not altogether withdraw from his former sphere of labour; as, by

* Shortly before the union of the two Synods in 1840, the Chair of Church History was endowed by Government with £150 per annum. Two or three years before the date mentioned in the text, the Chair of Sacred Literature was endowed with the same sum. Dr. Hanna and Dr. Edgar had, meanwhile, only £100 a year each.

common consent, he continued for many years afterwards, to occupy the pulpit of Alfred Street Church once every Lord's Day.

About two years before he demitted his pastoral charge, his congregation testified their personal regard for him by presenting his portrait, splendidly framed, to Mrs. Edgar. The painting — the work of an accomplished artist — had been engraved; and a large number of copies of the engraving had been distributed. The address to Mrs. Edgar accompanying the presentation was read by William Carson, Esq. — one of the original members of his flock, and one of his earliest and most attached friends. "We believe," said Mr. Carson on behalf of the meeting, "that Dr. Edgar requires no portrait to perpetuate his name. The many eminent ministers he has trained will testify to another generation his ability as a divine; and the many publications he has sent forth to the world will long remain as the monuments of his genius, patriotism and piety. * * * We believe we cannot more suitably express our esteem for yourself than by presenting you with this painting, to be handed down to his posterity as a simple and affecting memorial that the Patriarch of Temperance, the Professor of Theology, and the patron of so many philanthropic institutions, ministered to a congregation collected by his own efforts, and lived in the hearts of a grateful, united, and happy people."

When returning thanks, on the part of his wife, Dr. Edgar made some very appropriate and rather amusing

observations. This affair, he said, supplied him with a new motive to behave himself; for, if he did not continue to give satisfaction, his picture would soon fall into disrepute. He had known some, once highly popular, whose likenesses might have been seen in every drawing-room; but they had lost their reputation, and forthwith the engravings were either stowed away under a bed, or consigned to some other region of dishonour. He was now reminded that the same fate awaited his own representation, if the original transgressed; and, therefore, as he wished to avoid double degradation, he must henceforth endeavour to walk very circumspectly.

About this time a strange episode occurred in the history of the Home Mission of the Irish Presbyterian Church. In September, 1844, two priests from the Glens of Antrim appeared in Scotland, and addressed public meetings in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and other towns, declaring that the schools, said to be under the care of the Assembly for imparting religious instruction to the Irish through the medium of their native language, had no existence. They produced long lists of alleged pupils which they affirmed to be fictitious; and they cautioned the Presbyterians of North Britain against contributing to a scheme which, from beginning to end, they pronounced to be "a humbug." The zeal of the reverend gentlemen on such an errand awakened no small suspicion; for the shrewd disciples of John Knox could not well see why the representatives of Romanism had undertaken such a mission of

benevolence. They very naturally asked, Why these disclosures were not pressed on the attention of the Irish, rather than of the Scottish, public? In due time the whole affair was explained. Dr. Edgar, who about this time became one of the secretaries of the Home Mission, took up the case, and exposed the brazen-faced mendacity of these assailants of the Assembly's operations. He had made a journey to the Glens of Antrim; visited the teachers and the pupils; and satisfied himself by personal examination that the schools were doing good service in the way of promoting the spiritual enlightenment of the people. The priests had felt their influence; had taken the alarm; and had been cursing their adherents with bell, book, and candlelight. Understanding that much of the money for their support came from Scotland, they had gone over to that country in the hope of cutting off the supplies. On Sabbath, the 18th of August, 1844—the very month before these gentry crossed the channel—one of them, the Rev. Luke Walsh, had terrified the whole neighbourhood by hurling his ecclesiastical thunderbolts at a miller named Charles M'Loughlin, and two other individuals in his parish. M'Loughlin was an Irish teacher; and because he obeyed the dictates of his conscience rather than the directions of the priest, he was shut out from all the charities of life. His nearest neighbours dare not speak to him, or eat with him at the same table, or work with him in the same field; every one shunned him as the plague; and his mill was deserted. The

poor man was advised to appeal for redress to the laws of his country; at the County of Antrim Spring Assize, for 1846, the case was submitted to a jury; the facts were clearly proved; and M'Loughlin obtained a verdict against the priest with £70 damages.

Two of Dr. Edgar's tracts—"The Priests' Curse, I. and II."—relate to this transaction. He was at great pains to ascertain the exact significance of the Romish anathema, and he here lays before his readers the result of his investigations. After all, in this case, Father Walsh remained master of the field. "Though we won our cause," said Dr. Edgar, "yet such is the notorious expense of British justice, that not only were the seventy pounds swallowed up in law costs, and a hundred pounds, too, raised by myself and another, but poor M'Loughlin had to make his escape out of the country that he might not be laid in jail for a claim of thirty pounds over and above all!" The parish of Culfeightrin—unlike most of the remaining part of the County of Antrim—is an intensely Popish district; and the stout-hearted miller, even if the debt had been paid, could not have well afforded to live longer in the neighbourhood; for he had meanwhile become a Presbyterian. A case exhibiting in more glaring colours the effrontery and tyranny of Romanism has rarely been recorded.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BELFAST ACADEMICAL INSTITUTION—UNITARIAN INFLUENCE—DISSATISFACTION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY—GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS AS TO COLLEGIATE EDUCATION IN IRELAND—DEATH OF MRS. MAGEE—HER BEQUESTS—REV. RICHARD DILL, OF DUBLIN—COLLEGE CONTROVERSY—CHANCERY SUIT—MR. GIBSON AND HIS CO-TRUSTEES—DR. WILSON AND DR. EDGAR—ERECTION OF THE ASSEMBLY'S COLLEGE, BELFAST—THE HUGHES' SCHOLARSHIP—DR. D'AUBIGNE.

HEN the minister of Alfred Place Church was appointed by the Secession Synod to their Chair of Theology, a seminary where candidates for the ministry could pass through a complete course of education was still a novelty in Ulster. The Collegiate Classes of the Academical Institution, which had commenced only ten or eleven years before, were at first very thinly attended—as prestige, the reputation of professors, and other associations, were quite in favour of the old Universities. But the new school of learning gradually gained ground; its teachers rose in public estimation; the advantages of a home education began to be generally appreciated; and, about the time when the pastor of Alfred Place Church entered on the duties of the Divinity Chair, the classes in Belfast were in a flourishing condition.

There were, however, circumstances which led not a few to look with distrust on the young college. Arianism had taken deep root in and around Belfast; and many of the members of the Boards of Managers and Visitors of the Institution were understood to be decidedly hostile to the doctrines of the Westminster Confession. The buildings had been erected by voluntary contributions, and by far the greater portion of the funds expended on them came from Trinitarians;* but the Boards were elected at annual meetings held in the capital of Ulster; and, as persons living at a distance found it inconvenient to attend, the compact body of resident Unitarians contrived virtually to engross the management. The Boards could elect professors as well as set them aside, and otherwise interfere influentially with the course of instruction. Though the establishment was ostensibly conducted on the principle that no teacher of philosophy or literature was to meddle with matters of faith, it was found, in practice, very difficult to carry out such a vague arrangement. All the original professors, on whom students for the ministry were obliged to attend, were Trinitarians; but, as the seminary gained strength, it began to be remarked that the Boards, in appointments to vacant Chairs, not unfrequently showed undue favour to candidates either avowedly heterodox or suspected of rationalistic tendencies. In 1829,

* According to a statement signed by Dr. Hanna, as Chairman of the Assembly's Committee, and dated March 28th, 1841, £17,000 of the £22,000 expended on the Institution buildings, came from Trinitarians.

when the Unitarians withdrew from the Synod of Ulster, religious jealousies were exasperated. In 1837, when the Rev. Dr. J. S. Reid was appointed Professor of Church History for the Synod of Ulster, a strong party among the managers objected to permit him to lecture in the Institution; and the motion that he should be furnished with accommodation was carried merely by the casting vote of the chairman. In 1840, when the union took place between the two great sections of Irish Presbyterians, the Institution managers and visitors seemed still more determined to wage war with the new Assembly. About that time they reprimanded Dr. Edgar because, in one of his prayers offered up in the Common Hall, he had offended his Unitarian auditors. A few months after the union was consummated, they insisted on introducing two Professors of Arianism into the Faculty, or Board of Professors. These proceedings led to an open rupture between the Assembly and the Institution. Dr. Edgar was employed, on this occasion, by the College Committee, to prepare a letter of remonstrance to the joint Boards; but this communication, signed by the Chairman, the Rev. William Campbell, of Whiteabbey, contained a statement of facts extremely unpalatable to those to whom it was addressed, and rather increased, than diminished, the feeling of alienation. At the annual meeting of Assembly in 1841, it was accordingly resolved unanimously "that the time had arrived when the Church ought to seek a college for the education of her ministers over which

she should have adequate authority and control; and that a committee be appointed to lay the case before Her Majesty's Government, and the Houses of Parliament, and urge the claim to have a college provided, incorporated, and endowed, in which, in common with all other their fellow-subjects, who desire sound philosophical education, young men may safely receive preparation for the Christian ministry in the Presbyterian Church." At the meeting of Assembly in 1843, a proposal was made with a view to re-open negotiations with the Boards of Managers and Visitors; but the proceedings terminated unsatisfactorily. At length, in September, 1844, a special meeting of the Supreme Court of the Church was held in Cookstown, "to consider the propriety of applying to Her Majesty's Government for aid in the erection and endowment of a college for the education of candidates for the ministry" under its own ecclesiastical superintendence and control. It was there agreed unanimously that it was "both desirable and necessary" that such a seminary be established.

About this time it was understood that Government contemplated some important movement in regard to Irish collegiate education; and the Assembly was convened at Cookstown that the Church might have an opportunity of putting in its claim, before Her Majesty's Ministers had matured any scheme of legislation. It was thought that, as Romanists were provided with Maynooth, and Episcopalians with the University of Dublin, the Assembly—representing nearly the

one-half of the Protestants of Ireland—had an equitable right to a separate seminary. A committee appointed by the meeting at Cookstown forwarded a memorial to the Irish Lord-Lieutenant, detailing the disadvantages under which candidates for the ministry had long laboured, and praying for aid in the establishment of a Presbyterian College. Lists were also opened; and subscriptions to a considerable amount obtained for the building of the contemplated seat of learning. But discouragements of a very formidable character soon presented themselves. Early in 1845, a deputation sent to London by the Assembly was distinctly informed that Government "would not endow any denominational college;" and in the same session of Parliament Sir Robert Peel introduced a bill for the establishment of three Queen's Colleges in Ireland. When it was known that one of these colleges was likely to be located in Belfast, subscriptions at once ceased to flow into the Presbyterian treasury. An opinion began to prevail that, should the appointments to professorships in the Northern Queen's College prove satisfactory, a well-equipped theological seminary would be quite sufficient for the wants of the Irish Presbyterian Church. In 1847 a Parliamentary grant of £250 per annum was made to each of four additional theological chairs; and the impression gained ground that a complete denominational college was unnecessary.

Whilst the Irish Assembly was occupied with the consideration of this subject, an event occurred which

introduced quite a new element into the discussion. On the 22nd of June, 1846, a wealthy Presbyterian lady, who had no near relatives, died in Dublin; and, when her will was opened, it was ascertained that, among large legacies for Presbyterian missions and other ecclesiastical objects, she had bequeathed "the sum of £20,000, in trust, to apply the same to the building and endowment of a College for the education of young men in preparation for the Christian ministry, in connexion with the General Assembly; the same to be built where the trustees, or the majority of them, shall determine." The aged testatrix was the widow of the Rev. William Magee, Presbyterian minister of Lurgan; and, by the death of a brother—an officer of high rank in the Indian army—had inherited the ample fortune which she thus distributed. Her brother had, it appears, heard of the rising fame and the pecuniary difficulties of the Belfast Academical Institution; and, regarding it as a place of education for students looking forward to the ministry in the Irish Presbyterian Church, had signified his determination to bequeath to it £20,000. When almost in the act of making his will, death interposed; and he died intestate. His sister, who had heard of his design, felt it her duty to carry it, at least to some extent, into execution;* but, as the Belfast Institution had meanwhile been alienated from the Presbyterian Church, she found it necessary to make a corresponding change in her testamentary

* It appears she originally intended to bequeath only £10,000 for collegiate purposes.

arrangements. During her residence in Dublin she had become acquainted with the Rev. Richard Dill, a Presbyterian clergyman of good address and considerable ability; she had attended on his ministry for years; and he had been meanwhile her confidential counsellor. By her will, Mr. Dill, the Rev. Dr. Brown, of Aghadoey, and James Gibson, Esq., now Chairman for the County of Donegal, were the trustees for the management of the £20,000 to be applied to the building and endowment of the College.

This golden gift soon became an apple of discord. The trustees insisted that the £20,000 must be appropriated to the erection of a college, including an undergraduate as well as a theological course; the Assembly declined to make any immediate provision for an undergraduate department. Until after Mrs. Magee's death, it was always understood that the contemplated Seminary was to be erected at Belfast, and that the existing Professors of the Assembly were to be connected with it; but, as to its exact position, there was a difference of opinion—some contending that it should be placed in the northern part of the town, whilst others proposed that it should stand on the western boundary, or in the neighbourhood of Malone. When the trustees found that their views were not accepted by the Assembly, they fixed the site at Londonderry. The various points in dispute were eventually submitted to the arbitrament of the Court of Chancery, where, after much litigation, it was decided that, with some modifications, the will of the trustees

should prevail; that a college, including a literary and scientific, as well as a theological department, should be provided; and that it should be built in the Maiden City. In 1865, nineteen years after the death of Mrs. Magee, the Derry College was opened for the admission of students.

Mr. Gibson, the lay trustee, acted throughout this whole affair in the true spirit of a Christian gentleman. He was not always in harmony with Dr. Brown and Mr. Dill; but even when concurring with them, in opposition to the views of the majority of their brethren, he was respected for the candour and good feeling with which he stated his convictions. The most distressing and humiliating controversy that has ever yet agitated the Irish Assembly cannot be laid to his account. The dispute in relation to the College question disturbed the church for years; and the two clerical trustees did not always keep within the bounds of legitimate discussion. The late Dr. Robert Wilson, of Belfast, Professor of Sacred Literature, was one of the most honourable and high minded ministers ever connected with his denomination; and Dr. Edgar had again and again demonstrated that he was willing to sacrifice everything for principle; but Dr. Brown and Mr. Dill openly impeached their integrity when sent to London to treat with Government on College matters; and the charges were repeated so boldly and so pertinaciously, that the church was at length obliged to interfere and denounce the accusation.* At a special meeting of

* In his letters on "Collegiate Education in Ulster" (Belfast, 1852, Letters 1 and 2,) Dr. Wilson has demonstrated the absurdity of this accusation.

Assembly, held in Belfast in 1846, attention having been called to these attacks made in the Court itself, as well as in the newspapers, by the two trustees against the two professors, it was moved, and carried by a majority of forty-eight to three, "that there is not the slightest ground for imputation on the conduct of these brethren in the business upon which they were part of a deputation to London in 1845." Dr. Brown was, no doubt, solicitous to fulfil what he believed to be the intentions of Mrs. Magee; but his proposals were sometimes quixotic or impracticable, and he often seemed entirely to forget that those who differed from him were quite as wise and as honest as himself. Thwarted in his views, in relation to the College, Mr. Dill sunk down into settled discontent; and, in that distempered state of mind, wrote his "Prelatico-Presbyterianism"—a work which found few purchasers, and which is, unquestionably, a foolish libel on the church of his fathers. He there repeats his charges against Dr. Edgar, and ignores the resolution of assembly in which his own conduct is condemned. Even before the commencement of the College controversy, he had contrived to embroil himself with the worthy ministers of Dublin; and it had, in consequence, been found necessary to transfer him and his congregation to another Presbytery. Though not much distinguished by depth of judgment, he was a ready and graceful speaker; and, in company, when no one crossed his inclinations, he was agreeable and entertaining; but his temper was imperious, and his spirit unbending. He was a member of a family which has

furnished not a few choice spirits to the Presbyterian Church; and he was himself a man of unimpeachable integrity. As the friend and counsellor of Mrs. Magee, he obtained much credit for her princely legacies,* and, as her executor, he might have wielded immense influence; but he wanted some of those personal qualities necessary to make him a general favourite. The opposition he encountered from the Assembly is said to have preyed upon his spirit, and to have brought on the maladies which hastened him to the grave. Upwards of two years before his death he declared, that the struggles in which he had been involved, "operating on a nervous temperament, and a spirit keenly sensitive on such matters," had produced their effects, and rendered his life more precarious than it might otherwise have been.† Happy is the man who can cheerfully submit to contradiction, and who, intent only on the service of God, can quietly hold on the even tenor of his way through honour and dishonour!

When Dr. Edgar found that the £20,000, bequeathed by Mrs. Magee, could not be made available for the erection of a Seminary at Belfast, he forthwith applied himself to the collection of the necessary funds; and, in conjunction with Dr. Morgan, soon placed the College committee in a position to commence building operations. When the edifice was nearly ready for the reception of students, he travelled all the way to Switzerland, accompanied by one of his brethren, to

* She bequeathed, in all, upwards of £70,000 to Presbyterian objects.
† Prelatico-Presbyterianism, Preface, p. ix.

induce the celebrated Dr. D'Aubigné to come over to Ireland, and deliver the Inaugural Address. Mr. Dill was a total stranger to the Professor of Geneva; but he had a morbid antipathy to Professors at Belfast; and when he understood that what he scornfully designated their *Academy*, was about to be graced by the presence of the Historian of the Reformation, he had the folly to address a letter to him, and urge him to remain at home! Dr. D'Aubigne, amazed at this strange missive, reported it to Dr. Edgar, and arrived soon afterwards in Belfast.

The establishment of bursaries in the College was an object which Dr. Edgar had much at heart. Young men of slender means, who possess piety and talent, may thus be greatly assisted in their preparation for the ministry; and it would be difficult to point out any other way in which a benevolent individual may more judiciously or profitably invest a portion of his superabundant wealth. Immediately after the erection of the college buildings, Dr. Edgar suggested to Lady Johnson the propriety of founding a bursary, at once to encourage the young seminary, and to honour the memory of her father. Thomas Hughes, Esq., was a steady member of the Presbyterian church, and some of his ancestors had been elders in the congregation of Carnmoney. He had amassed a princely fortune, which was inherited by an only daughter. Dr. Edgar used to say of him that he differed from most men whose pecuniary aid he had occasion to solicit; for whilst others—when they

first heard his statements—expressed their readiness to give, but afterwards often contracted their offers, Mr. Hughes, who was naturally parsimonious, and yet extremely conscientious, would sometimes, after mature deliberation, greatly enlarge his original subscriptions. In accordance with the advice of Dr. Edgar, Lady Johnson appropriated £500 to the establishment of "The Hughes' Scholarship"—the first gift of the kind made to Belfast Presbyterian College. In a few generations it will perhaps be almost the only monument remaining to perpetuate the memory of one of Belfast's most successful merchants.

Before the opening of the College Dr. D'Aubigné had known something of the Irish Professor of Theology; and, on the day on which he delivered the Inaugural Address, he declared before one of the most brilliant audiences ever congregated in the capital of Ulster, that he would rather be the author of "The Cry from Connaught" than of all the volumes he had written. We are thus reminded that Dr. Edgar had entered on another great work before the close of the college controversy; and, to the consideration of his proceedings in the West of Ireland, we must now address ourselves.

CHAPTER X.

THE HOME MISSION—IRISH SCHOOLS—REV. H. M'MANUS · VISIT OF DRS. EDGAR AND KIRKPATRICK TO THE SOUTH AND WEST OF IRELAND—UNITARIANISM IN THE SOUTH—NEGLIGENCE OF THE EPISCOPAL CLERGY—EVILS OF ROMANISM—HOPEFUL INDICATIONS—REV. MICHAEL BRANNIGAN—REV. ROBERT ALLEN—THE FAMINE—DR. EDGAR IN CONNAUGHT—HIS APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC—MRS. ROGERS—RENEWED APPEAL—BELFAST LADIES' RELIEF ASSOCIATION—RELIEF FUND FOR IRELAND.

HOUGH, long before the Union, the Secession Synod and the Synod of Ulster had turned their attention to Connaught as a missionary field, they had failed, owing to a variety of causes, to make any considerable impression on that benighted province. In the last century Presbyterian ministers were settled at Sligo, Turlough, and one or two other places; but three or four small congregations in the midst of a dense Roman Catholic population, and separated from each other at great distances, laboured under peculiar disadvantages. About the year 1834, the importance of instructing the native Irish through the medium of their own language was brought under the notice of the Synod of Ulster. Irish schools were subsequently established in Mayo

and Galway, as well as in the Glens of Antrim, in Tyrone, and elsewhere; and for many years the late Rev. Robert Allen, of Stewartstown, a minister of great intelligence and Christian worth, acted as their superintendent. At the period of the Union, in 1840, there were six or seven Presbyterian ministers in Connaught;* and in February, 1841, the Presbytery of Dublin ordained the Rev. Henry M'Manus, a pious and zealous young licentiate, as a missionary to the south and west of Ireland. Mr. M'Manus was well acquainted with the Irish language; and, shortly after his ordination, preached to the natives in their own tongue in many parts of Connaught. But the principal sphere of his labours about this period was the county of Kerry, where he established several missionary stations.†

The interest taken by Dr. Edgar in the creation of the Bi-centenary Fund has been already noticed. The subscriptions were to be paid within two years by annual instalments; and, as the money was to be employed in the evangelization of Roman Catholic Ireland, he thought it well, before the whole was gathered in, to make himself acquainted, by personal examination, with at least part of the field over which it was to be distributed. At the meeting of the Assembly, in 1843, after resigning his office as Moderator, he

* At Killala, Sligo, Turlough, Ballymote, Westport, Galway, and Roundstone. Roundstone is now a mission station. In 1840, the Rev. William Crotty, a reformed priest, preached there.

† In a little work, entitled "Sketches of the Irish Highlands," he has given an account of his missionary operations. He died in October, 1864.

accordingly proposed to accompany his friend, the Rev. W. B. Kirkpatrick, of Dublin, on a visit to the mission stations and congregations of the Presbyterian Church in the south and west of Ireland. The offer was willingly accepted; and, a few days afterwards, the two brethren set out on their tour of exploration. On the 1st of August, 1843, they were present at the first meeting of the Presbytery of Cork, then just organised. They visited also Stratford, Carlow, Kilkenny, New Ross, Wexford, Waterford, Lismore, Fermoy, Cove, Bandon, Killarney, Tralee, and the adjacent districts. In seventeen days they held thirty-two public meetings; and Dr. Edgar, on his return to Belfast, had travelled 700 miles. He had meanwhile profited much by what he had seen and heard. The spiritual desolation produced everywhere in Munster by the stealthy spread of Unitarianism among the Presbyterian ministers, filled him with shame and sorrow. No wonder that, immediately after coming home, he made that famous speech already mentioned, on the occasion of the Bi-centenary Commemoration of the Meeting of the Westminster Assembly, which so grievously provoked a theological antagonist. Some of his auditors in Rosemary Street Presbyterian Church may have been astonished at the tone and spirit in which he then expressed himself; but had they been fresh from his tour of inspection, and had they seen how false sentinels all over the south had betrayed the citadels of the faith, they would perhaps have found an apo-

logy for the bitter scorn which he poured out on the conceited and blighting heresy. "The south of Ireland," said he, in an account of his journey, "has seen such a specimen of Unitarianism as it will ever remember with horror; and let any plain man, who wants to know what Unitarianism, undisguised and practical, is, not put himself to the expense and trouble of buying and reading books—let him give himself no trouble with Griesbach, or Priestly, or the 'Improved Version of the New Testament;' he needs not read Pye Smith, or even Dr. Wardlaw; let him just step across to Fermoy, or Bandon, or Cork, or Tipperary, and see with his own eyes, in the turf-house for example, or dog-kennel, once a Unitarian meeting-house—let him read in the utter destruction of even the outward forms of Christianity, and the overthrow down to the ground of the very houses in which worship was celebrated—let him see and decide for himself, that Unitarianism, with all its ludicrous puffing, is only infidelity under a hypocritical specious name."

Other lessons were taught him during this tour of inspection. He saw that much of the boasted growth of Romanism might be attributed to the gross neglect of the Episcopal clergy. Popery is doomed to perish; it shall assuredly fall before the Word of God and prayer; but not a few, in the garb of ministers, do not know how to handle these heavenly weapons. There were, no doubt, among the clergy of the Establishment a goodly number of laborious and worthy

men; but too many were of a different character. When a Presbyterian minister made his appearance within their borders, these gentry could bestir themselves and raise up opposition; and yet they could live on excellent terms with the parish Priest, and quietly permit their Protestant hearers to join his communion. "Everywhere throughout a long journey," said Dr. Edgar, "melancholy tidings reached the Deputation, of Protestants, in large numbers, through long and entire neglect, going over to Popery. If the meaning of a good living, with any minister, be a living where much is received for doing little—if any minister, miscalled Protestant, be of the same mind as the minister's wife, who thanked God that the parishioners were turning Papists, because Robert (her husband) would have less to do—if any minister could be so base as to rebuke a parishioner for troubling him with bringing his child to be baptised, when Father Tom could do it as well; and if any minister, while himself doing nothing, could use every effort to prevent others from doing, in his bounds, anything either, then it would not be difficult to discover reasons for the terrible fact, a fact of which northern Protestants are fearfully ignorant, that Protestantism in the south and west of Ireland is most lamentably and contemptibly small, and Popery most rampantly, proudly, and intolerably great. It is vain," he adds, "to talk of intermarriages as the great reason for the many desertions from Protestantism to which the Popish south bears witness: were there proper religious in-

struction and proper ministerial superintendence, such intermarriages would be very few. The great and chief reason of the flagrant disgrace of Protestantism so common in the south, of families, from ten to thirty in a single parish, and not unfrequently of whole colonies, being swallowed up by Popery, is, that these families and colonies have for years found no man to care for their souls. Such persons have said to our missionaries, when asked what could have so stolen away their senses as to throw them into the arms of Popery, We were taught no religion, we knew no religion, and living in the midst of Papists, we thought it better to be Papists than to have no religion at all."

During this tour Dr. Edgar saw also, more clearly than ever before, the evils of Romanism. Wherever he travelled he witnessed its debasing and unhallowed influence. It was associated with filth and rags, with grovelling superstition and gross blasphemy, with disregard for human life and with Sabbath desecration. "Assuredly," said he, "a country stands disastrously in need of a practical illustration of a Presbyterian Christian Sabbath, where the pleasure-grounds of a Roman Catholic nobleman are open to the public only on the Sabbath; where the great day for practising by the teetotal bands is the Sabbath; where the great agitation meetings for Repeal are held on the Sabbath; and where, on the same sacred day, pleasure and business, in all varieties, are publicly and unblushingly pursued: and a country stands equally in need of Presbyterian morality, while, for a very trifling sum, a

wretch can be hired to murder one who never offended him, and whom, perhaps, till pointed out to him by his employer, he did not know, even by name."

Though Dr. Edgar, during this tour, observed much that was painful and depressing, he also saw enough to drive away despair. In a dark land the Lord had not left Himself without witnesses ; and striking proofs of the power of His word ever and anon presented themselves. "Already," said he, "the benighted South has experienced, in not a few instances, the sanctifying influences of Presbyterian doctrine and worship, as the deputation, from their own observation, gladly testify. Here, for example, we were hospitably entertained in a family where the mistress is rejoicing in the happy change effected on her husband's character since he joined the Presbyterian Church; and there we were introduced to a God-fearing Presbyterian husband and wife, one of whom, a short time since, was a careless Quaker, and the other a Romanist. Here we found that one, after sedulous attendance on ordinances, had applied for admission to the holy communion, who had been a poor drunken Papist; and there, that a man officiates as elder, and is never absent from a single service, who had been first attracted to the place of Presbyterian worship by following the soldiers in, through idle curiosity; while another elder, a pious devoted man, who, in the midst of extensive business, observes family worship regularly, confesses that a short time ago, he was on the borders of infidelity."

On the 24th of June, 1845, the Rev. Michael Brannigan was ordained by the Presbytery of Tyrone as a missionary to the south and west of Ireland. About this time the Belfast students had formed a missionary society for the benefit of their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen; and, knowing that Mr. Brannigan was well acquainted with the Irish language, they had selected him as a suitable evangelist. He had been a very staunch Romanist; but, by means of the Rev. Robert Allen, superintendent of the Irish schools, he had been brought to a knowledge of the truth; and his spiritual father had recommended the students to choose him as their first missionary. In that capacity he arrived in Connaught in the autumn of 1845. In the counties of Sligo and Mayo he had under his care 144 Irish schools; his addresses in the native tongue awakened much attention; and, in a short time, he had twelve preaching stations attended by considerable congregations. In the autumn of 1846, Dr. Edgar, who was now honorary secretary to the Assembly's Home Mission, accompanied Mr. Allen on his visit of inspection to these schools in Connaught. Before leaving the north, the blight of the potato crop was beginning to excite discussion; but, when he reached the western province, he was obliged to be a spectator of scenes such as he had never before contemplated. The whole country was let out in patches of two, three, or four acres each, among a pauper population; the potato was their only food; and now, that it had failed, there was the immediate prospect

of general starvation. Men, weak with hunger, might be seen digging in the fields, and unable, after hours of labour, to provide one miserable meal. On the 11th of September, after the examination of the Irish schools, one of the teachers turned to the stranger from Belfast, and told him, in simple, yet touching language, how the famine was sore in the land. Dr. Edgar was evidently much moved, for he knew that the statements were only too true. "With tears in his eyes," says Mr. Brannigan, who was present, "he delivered a short and pithy address, in which he held out some hope of relief. Joy beamed in every countenance, and the house resounded with blessings on his head." "On the day after the examination of the Irish schools," continues Mr. Brannigan, "he took a walk with me on the Killala Road, when a man in an adjoining field attracted his attention. We wended our way to him, and, in answer to our inquiries, he informed us that he was searching for potatoes; but that, as others had been there before him on the same errand, it was nearly labour in vain—adding that he saw nothing but death before himself and the children. Dr. Edgar asked him for the loy, or spade; and, when it was presented to him, handled it as skilfully as if he had been trained to husbandry. He dug fully seven yards, and made several other experiments on spots around him. All the fields were then treated as common property, for the owners thought it only loss of time to turn over the soil. When the digging was completed, Dr. Edgar gathered up the potatoes, car-

ried them to St. Patrick's Well adjoining, washed them there, tied them up in a silk pocket-handkerchief, and deposited the parcel in his pocket. On handing back the loy, he put a piece of silver into the hand of the poor man, who seemed confounded, not well knowing how to interpret what had just occurred. It was then currently believed in the neighbourhood that, in a pitched battle at Downpatrick Head, the Connaught fairies had been vanquished, and that the northern fairies had blighted, or rather carried off, the potato crop. The poor man, as I subsequently learned, after witnessing the odd performance of his odd-looking visitor—and particularly the washing of the potatoes in St. Patrick's Well—was impressed with the idea that the dark-visaged stranger might be the commander-in-chief of the victorious gentry, and that it would be prudent to beware of him. But the piece of silver, under the circumstances, was a temptation too strong for him to resist. He therefore turned his back on us, and after spitting on the coin by way of precaution, lodged it in his pocket."

On the following morning, Dr. Edgar reached the house of the Rev. David Rogers, the Presbyterian minister of Killala. Immediately after his arrival, he sat down in the parlour, and wrote the following letter to the editor of the *Banner of Ulster*:—

"FAMINE IN CONNAUGHT.

"Mullaferry, Killala Bay,

"*Sept.* 13, 1846.

"SIR,—I write to you from the midst of a poor and

distressed people, looking forward, in ominous stillness, to all the horrors of famine. I have travelled widely among them for some days; have sat with them in their cheerless homes, and have entered into friendly conversation with hundreds who, if relief do not come speedily, will in a few weeks die of hunger.

"The great proportion of them live on a bare and unproductive soil; a few are possessors of as fertile land as was ever warmed by a genial sun. But what can a farm of three or four acres—the average size over large districts—do for the support of a family? Oats grown on it all, without any pasture for the lean ass, man's faithful servant here, would be far, indeed, from producing, in meal, a sufficient supply, even were the landlord to forego his whole claim. The potato, therefore, has been the only resource, and in most cases without any addition but salt, or as a luxury salt fish, their only food. Corn mills are for the rich, and even the old querns, once turned by the hand of the poor, are of no use now, for the pig so carefully reared, and all the corn, scarcely suffice to satisfy the landlord's demands.

"What, then, must be the condition of this wretched people, when the potato, their staff of life, is gone—in a few short weeks literally and wholly gone? Yesterday I met a multitude of lean pigs, on their road to Killala market, but scarcely one returned. They were driven away from homes of starvation—they were purchased to be conveyed away to other districts where gaunt famine has not yet appeared.

"To enable me to form a correct opinion of the extent of the potato failure, I yesterday took the loy from a poor fellow who, in a field near Ballina, was digging up a stalk here and there, where he expected to find a potato for his pig, and dug a perch of a ridge, as a fair specimen of the whole field, and of the whole district. The potatoes dug out of this perch, which formerly yielded four stone, I washed in St. Patrick's well, so famous for its stations and healing virtues, and miraculous trout, and then found that the whole of them weighed just three pounds, thirteen of them only weighing two ounces, and few of them being larger than a pigeon's egg, a great portion of them being offensively bad, and none of them being fit for human food.

"What, then, must, in a few weeks, be the state of such a village, for example, as I visited yesterday, containing, by the late census, 600 inhabitants, paying £4 10s. an acre for their stripes of land, three ridges broad, their bay deserted by the herring, their potatoes gone, and their barley seized for rent? What will they do when their few perches of potato ridge are all dug over? Will able-bodied fathers sit down peaceably beside their children, and die of hunger, while hundreds of the fattest bullocks and sheep are grazing beside them, on the pastures of a landlord rich as Crœsus?

"The people of this village are Roman Catholics—many of them deplorably ignorant. Some of those into whose houses I entered could speak Irish alone;

their Protestant neighbours, scattered thinly over the surrounding district, are, many of them, in the same deplorable distress, and have before their eyes the same awfully-impending fate. Yet all are peaceful, submissive, and even cheerful. I have heard no expressions of envy or malice, no threats, and, indeed, no murmur; but, on the contrary, I have heard everywhere, even from the poorest of the poor, most religious expressions of submission to the Divine will, and of assurance that a God of justice and mercy is acting wisely and well.

"Ere yesterday I accompanied a funeral, and mingled and conversed freely with the people. The priest had another call, but had sent the holy water and consecrated clay; there was, however, a delay in opening the grave, and while the *keening* was going on over many a tomb, and many voices joined in raising plaintive and loud the wild Irish cry, I had an opportunity, when the first burst of grief and sympathy was over, to know the feelings of one and another over their father's grave, in their present melancholy circumstances.

"'Is it,' said I, to one noble-looking woman, whose appearance and manner I shall never forget, 'is it in honour of the boy to be buried now, that those who kneel with their heads on the graves cry so bitterly?' 'No,' said she, softly and with much feeling, 'it is a tribute of sorrow to their own departed dead. They embrace the opportunity of indulging, for a little moment, the grief of their hearts for parents and brothers gone. But why,' she continued, 'distress themselves

thus? Why add to their present sorrows by mourning for those who are far away from the voice of their cry? Here am I, sitting on the grave of my father and mother, and what good would it do them for me to add to the bitterness of my present lot? God's hand is upon us now, and let us be calm and resigned. The girl at the other end of the tombstone, who, with her companions, cries with a sore and bitter cry, bends over the grave of her mother, who left her a little while since, the oldest of eight children, to watch over them, and help to provide for them, in these times of terrible want.'

"On my making the poor girl a small present, a thousand blessings were showered on me from all around, but neither then, nor on any other occasion, was there any solicitation, any manifestation of greed, any fawning servility; but on the contrary, a respectful yet dignified deportment. No vulgar staring, or impertinent curiosity, when I entered a house. No anxiety to draw my attention to their poverty. No obtrusive curiosity. But on the contrary, the most pleasing, confiding affability, most gratifying attention, and a genuine, sensitive, native politeness, flowing fresh from the heart, which would be sought for in vain on the stand at the race course, or in the fashionable ball.

"Let the man who wishes to know the real bliss of giving, carry his liberality to Connaught. Let him who would become acquainted with the bliss which expressions of heartfelt gratitude bestow, confer favours

on the people who breathe the pure air that blows down from the mountain range of Nephin.

"Where, in all the world, shall we find a more generous, more affectionate, more social, more truly polite, faithful, and grateful people than such of the genuine native Irish as are to be found in multitudes among the bogs and in the mountain fastnesses of Connaught? and yet, with all their excellencies, these hapless people are on the brink of starvation—on some of them the scourge of famine has already fallen.

"Ere yesterday, seventeen persons, none of them a beggar, all of them decent neighbours, came to the house where I now write, in hope of getting a meal; a family of four came for their supper here last night, not knowing where to find breakfast this morning.

"Relief for such must come at once, or they will be all dead—relief must come for the whole mass, for hunger breaks through stone walls; and let us not delay till wise men are driven mad.

"The Government will no doubt aid, wisely and largely aid, but for many they will come too late—for many, weak and bedridden, aid, in the shape of employment, cannot come at all. Private benevolence must awake at once, and give and work for those that are ready to perish.

"I offer my agency to all who may honour me with their confidence. Whatever I can do is at their service. I have made acquaintance with not a few over a wide district, who thoroughly know the circumstances of the people, and who are willing to act gratuitously

in a faithful application of whatever benevolence may entrust to their care. The lady, for example, whose hospitality I enjoy, and who has parted with her only servant, that she may be able to contribute more for preventing death by starvation, goes off throughout her neighbours to-day, to make a personal distribution of what I have given her, for getting meal in the market to-morrow.

"There are others here of the same spirit willing and qualified to apply what Christian generosity may give. In the name of the famishing I beg for aid—in the name of Him who died for such as these I ask for assistance, a generous assistance, now; and may that God who loves a cheerful giver put it in the heart of many to pity and relieve those from whom a mysterious Providence has withdrawn their daily bread.

"JOHN EDGAR, D.D."

The lady to whom Dr. Edgar refers in this letter, as having parted with her only servant that she might be able to do more for preventing death by hunger, was Mrs. Rogers, wife of the Presbyterian minister of Killala. Often did he speak of the thrift, self-denial, kindness, and energy of that noble-hearted woman. Throughout the whole period of the famine she exerted herself with extraordinary activity to relieve the distressed; and as the distributor of funds afterwards placed by the charitable at her disposal, was instrumental in saving multitudes from starvation. Dr. Edgar's letter was immediately copied into various

journals; and in a few days he received contributions which enabled him to afford seasonable aid in many cases of pressing necessity. As soon as he returned to Belfast, he endeavoured to enlist more extensive sympathy on behalf of the sufferers. A public meeting was convened in May Street Presbyterian Church, that he might have an opportunity of stating to his fellow-townsmen what he had witnessed in his recent tour; the large edifice was filled by a deeply-interested audience; and he proceeded in the following terms to give an account of the position of the people of Connaught :—

"It is religious and wise to say that the present great calamity on our native land will be overruled for good, for the hand of God is in it; and however dark the dispensation may be to us, all is for good, and all will in the end be well.

"But there is a species of heartless philosophy current which says this calamity will, in the end, be good for Ireland, because it will cure the Irish of their laziness, and force them to seek a better food than potatoes. As to the latter part of this philosophy, all I have to say is, that, if the potato be an evil, it is one which millions would gladly bear; and may the poor of our country never have a worse evil than good potatoes and plenty of good milk and butter to them.

"As to the laziness of the Irish, I don't believe it; I don't know of any country where people work hard for the mere love of work, neither do I know any

country where people work well who are not well paid. In Connaught, where I have lately been, men are paid eightpence, and sometimes sixpence a-day, board wages; and I put it to yourselves, is a man called on to work himself to death for eightpence a-day?

"But this talk about laziness, and about potatoes being bad food, does not touch the real merits of the case. It distresses me to hear men talking very learnedly and very coldly about the necessity of teaching the Irish, in present circumstances, a taste for luxuries, for the comforts of life, and so forth; because such talk evidences melancholy apathy, and ignorance too, of the real state of the case.

"The real state of the case in regard to the districts of Connaught, for which I wish to engage your sympathies, is this: the land, in general, is unproductive, and the population is so overflowing, that a father of a family, of perhaps six or eight, thinks himself fortunate in having got hold, at a high rent, of three or four acres. These acres would not grow wheat; and suppose that they were all sown in oats, they would not afford food to his family, even had he not a farthing of rent to pay. What, therefore, is he forced to do? He is forced to have recourse to potatoes, simply because an acre of potatoes furnishes as much food as four acres of corn.

"The real fact of the case, I repeat, is this: the poor Connaughtman eats none of his own corn, none of his own butter, none of his pig; corn, butter, pig—all go to pay his rent; and whatever potatoes remain

after the pig is fed, are the only food, the only support of his family.

"It is a libel, therefore, on the poor Irishman to say that he is too lazy or too savage to seek for better food than potatoes; his only nourishment is potatoes, because the other products of his farm go to his landlord, and because potatoes are the only crop sufficiently productive to save himself and his family from starvation.

"It is mighty fine for Englishmen, or even Irishmen here in Ulster, to talk of luxuries, where there are so many manufactories, and where, not only a man himself, but his wife and children, can earn good wages; but the Connaughtman has no manufacture, no employment for his family; and for himself, only partial employment as a day-labourer, at eightpence a-day.

"When distress comes on a man in humble life here, he has some little store on which to draw—if not money, at least furniture, or extra clothing, which he can place in 'pawn;' but the Connaughtman has no clothing but what he wears; and as for furniture, you might enter house after house in Connaught, as I have, and find no table, no chair, no cupboard, no bedstead deserving the name, no spoon, no knife, no anything, except a square box, and a potato pot, which a pawnbroker would take in pawn.

"In fact, a large proportion of the houses are not fit for anything that we would dignify with the name of furniture. They have no chimney, no window, their floors are fearfully damp, their roofs are often not

watertight, and the general custom is to have cow, pig, ass, and geese, all in the same apartment with the family—all sleeping together, and all going out and in by the same door.

"Such, then, being a true picture of the people of the Mayo district of Connaught, whose claims I advocate—such being their condition, even in the best seasons—their houses cheerless, and dark, and damp, and smoky, and filthy too, as asses, cows, pigs, and poultry can make them—their corn the property of the landlord—their only food potatoes—what, I ask you, must be their state, when, in an awfully mysterious Providence, their only food has been entirely destroyed?—what, I ask you, is the remedy which, in such circumstances, you propose.

"Let the landlords, do you say, not demand their rent for the present year? Some landlords there are willing, I am sure, to do everything that justice and mercy demand. No people can have a better landlord than the Earl of Arran. I heard high praises of an excellent family resident at Easky. Mr. Jones, who has established a mail communication to Ballina, deserves all praise for his public spirit and enterprise; and in the heart of Connaught there lives a John Knox, worthy of his great name, because he is all that a resident landlord and a Christian gentleman ought to be.

"There are, however, other landlords of a very different spirit—some non-resident, some resident—who have no heart to feel for the poor. I have heard of

eight guineas an acre having been charged for land because it lies along a bay, where there was a good fishing-station; and though it has long ceased to be good, the land sets for four pounds ten shillings an acre yet. To seize the poor man's barley on that land for rent, such a year as this, is surely cruel. Deeply as I detest whisky-drinking, I never detested it more thoroughly than when I looked into a room, one evening, and saw a man sitting drinking punch, after having that day seized the grain of his poor tenants for rent.

"But even though all the landlords were willing to forego their rents, many of them have it not in their power, being themselves deeply in debt, and their property heavily mortgaged to their creditors, who are the real receivers of their rents.

"It is not for me to speculate what amount of assistance Government will afford. Where there are a few poor among many rich, something effective can be done for them; but where nearly all are poor—where young and old, healthy and sick, male and female, able-bodied and infirm, are in one mass of destitution and starvation — what can be done for them? Government must give cautiously—must give for work done—must give in small proportions—must give chiefly in the frontier towns; and how can such charity meet the whole case? Here is a family with a widowed mother at its head; there is another with a bed-ridden father; and here again are two or three maiden sisters living unprotected in the same wretched

hovel. Who is to earn money at the public works for them? and, supposing meal to be given out, a stone at a time, to each family, when a poor, hunger-bitten, debilitated creature travels eight or ten miles to and from the Government store, and hangs in the street for half a winter's day, waiting his turn, won't he have earned his stone of Indian meal very hard and sore, when, wet and weary, he has brought it to his comfortless home?

"Whatever Government may do or may not do, there is a plain duty and a blessed privilege before us. God calls us to contribute generously and at once, to prevent our own countrymen, our own brothers and sisters, from dying of hunger. Famine is not an evil threatened, or at a distance; it has actually begun, and there is not a moment to lose. The potato crop is not a twentieth part of what it used to be; and it is all bad, wholly unfit for human food. The only potatoes fit to eat were at scattered stalks from last year's seed, growing here and there among the corn, and they have been all grubbed up and consumed. What, then, is to be done? Do you expect a family to live on the handful of cabbage in the garden? or if they have a few stooks of barley, are they to defy the landlord and the law, and eat them, and leave for next year no seed and no hope of life at all? Even were they to attempt this, I don't see how it is to be done; for over large districts of many square miles, there is no such thing as a mill; nobody, even in the best of times, making meal; nobody, except perhaps a mother

with a child at her breast, tasting such a luxury as stirabout; and the old querns only used for grinding malt for private stills, being too slow and rough a machine to make, in any reasonable time, or indeed to make at all, a sufficient quantity of good meal.

"Happy, therefore, are they who, in such circumstances, live within three or four miles of a town, and one or two of a turf bog; for, if they have an ass, and have paid for a bit of bog, they can send a couple of creels full to town, and sell them for twopence! Amid poverty and starvation, it is refreshing to look on the pleasant faces, and hear the cheerful conversation of the little girls along the roads, mounted behind their creels, driving without bridle or halter the obedient ass. Let any man who wants to learn genuine politeness go and learn it from these little girls. One day, when I gave a penny to a boy, his sister, riding on an ass before me, immediately thanked me most courteously. The shabby suspicion arose in my mind that this was a civil hint for a penny to herself—but no, it was genuine gratitude—genuine honest politeness; and when, after some conversation with her, I was passing away from her along a different road, perhaps never to meet her again, her affectionate 'God speed you on your journey,' so cheerful and so kind, forced me to feel how much I was her inferior in real good manners, and perhaps in real religion too.

"But, suppose that this genuine lady of God's own making behind the creels, were not mistress of an ass or of turf, what then must be her fate? During harvest,

for a very few weeks, she might struggle to keep body and soul together, by following the example of another very interesting girl whom I overtook, with a rough, heavy creel on her back, climbing up a steep rock in the channel of the torrent, where her native village is built, lest it should occupy any arable land that might bring the landlord four guineas an acre. 'Ah,' said I, 'my good girl, it is too hard to make you carry turf upon your back in such a creel as that; have you no ass to relieve you of your burden?' 'Sir,' said she, modestly, 'it is not turf, but heads of barley, I carry.' 'And where do you get them?' 'I gather them after the reapers.' 'And what will you do with them when you go home?' 'I will beat them, Sir, with a stick.' What an interesting illustration of Scripture, thought I—what a genuine Irish Ruth is here! I wish that some accomplished artist, like him who painted the picture of Ruth, which I see hanging on so many drawing-room walls, would paint a likeness of our modern Irish Ruth, and hang it up before the eyes of all Irishmen, to wake up in their hearts some gallant and generous spirit on behalf of their poor starving countrywomen, forced to serve as beasts of burden, and eke out, in hunger and nakedness, a wretched existence; while pampered lap-dogs and taby cats are smothering in their own fat.

"It is to me a source of sincerest gratification that I should be honoured with even the humblest place, as an advocate of a people so highly deserving as those who claim an interest in your sympathies now. They

are genuine native Irish, far away behind their own bogs and mountains from the contaminating influence of a mercantile, polished, refined, hypocritical world.

"You call them ignorant, and I don't deny it; but remember that the vast majority of them are able to speak fluently two languages, and that is what a very small part of the present audience could do. They are ignorant, you repeat; well, it may be so, but they are willing to learn, and I have examined hundreds of them, and, had time permitted, I might have examined thousands of them, who can read English well, and who, from love to their own mother tongue, the Irish, have, at great sacrifices, learned to read in it, and understand the blessed Book of God.

"They are bigoted Romanists, you say, steeped in superstition, and the slaves of priestcraft. The more shame for us, I reply, who have not exerted ourselves as we should, to enlighten them and convert them to God; and the greater shame and the deeper disgrace will it be to us still, if we do not embrace the opportunities which Connaught is offering now, for its people are accessible—they are inquiring, they are reading, and arguing; there are noble spheres of usefulness open, and spiritual fields are white to harvest. This, however, is not my subject now; I hope soon to have an opportunity of directing public attention to spiritual famine in Connaught, but our effort now is to save the perishing body; and, whether our countryman and brother be a Protestant or Romanist, we acknowledge the claim which, in the day of his deep distress,

he has on our purses and our hearts. Our brother is starving, and, till we have satisfied his hunger, we have no time to inquire whether he is Protestant or Romanist. If we would act the part of the good Samaritan, it is enough for us to know that the cry of distress comes from a poor mortal like ourselves, and our first enquiry, our first anxiety, will be how best to do him good.

"In acting thus kindly towards the people of Connaught, you will only be imitating the great kindness which the poorest among them would show you, if you were living or travelling among them. In the midst of abject poverty and absolute destitution, their generosity and hospitality are most affecting. They make no inquiry whether you are Protestant or Roman Catholic; it is enough that you are a man and a stranger, for with them stranger is a holy name, and whatever their house contains is at your service. 'How sorry I am,' said a woman to me, 'that I was not at home when you called, that I might have had the happiness of welcoming you to my house.' This house of hers was a hole in a bank, with something at the fire-side like a hen roost, or what flax is dried on in Connaught, as the only bed for a large family; and so many holes in the roof, unto the top of which I stepped off a ditch, that the smoke was a chief thing to prevent the sun from shining inside the house as clearly as outside, though there was nothing anywhere except in the roof, pretending to be a window. One day, after hungry and weary travelling for nine hours, I found my

companions squatted round a little fourpenny loaf in rather a respectable sort of establishment, for there were two jugs, and one or two tea cups, out of which we drank huge quantities of water, yet, though our hospitable host's poor loaf did not leave a wreck behind, and his hen's nest was left without even a nest egg, not a farthing of recompense would he receive; no, no, he was too happy to have the honour of receiving under his poor roof such honourable gentlemen, and it was only by contriving to slip something into the hand of his child, that we got off with a safe conscience from a family on whom we had pounced with such an omniverous appetite.

"Another day, when passing, hungry and faint, by a house at which we had called in the morning, the mistress cried after us—'Sure, you're not going to pass without tasting a bit of what I have prepared for you.' Right glad to hear the news, we rushed in, and could scarcely believe our eyes, to find that our visit had been the death of two unfortunate hens, which, while we devoured, the good woman insisted on attending us, and, in the true patriarchal style of Abraham's politeness, when he entertained the angels, both she and her husband refused to sit down with guests, whom they wished most highly to honour. Such, in this case, was the style of superior politeness, and disinterested high-minded hospitality, that every one of our party felt that it would be esteemed a distressing affront to offer anything in the shape of remuneration; and we could, therefore, only tender our warmest expressions of gratitude.

"Hospitality, it is said, is the virtue of savage life; but life in Connaught is not savage; it is peaceful, remarkably peaceful; it is polite—eminently polite; it is social in the best sense of the term, it is delightfully grateful; and I trust that your liberality will make Connaught gratitude flow as a river of oil; both to strangers, and to friends, and neighbours, the Connaught peasant is pre-eminently kind. It is a melancholy fact that Romanism, to a fearful extent, profanes the Sabbath day; yet, while on the evening of Sabbath eight days, I passed over some dozen miles of country to preach, almost the only violations of the Sabbath which I witnessed were by poor fellows, here and there trying to find, in their desolate field, a few blighted potatoes, for a comfortless supper.

"There was one exception, however, and I expressed surprise and grief at seeing a large boon of reapers spread over a whole field, in full work on the Sabbath evening. The explanation was this—and I give it as I got it, without comment—'The field belongs to a poor widow, whose husband lately died. These people have hard scraping, every week-day, to collect as much as will keep themselves from starving, and they are embracing the opportunity of the Sabbath's rest, for doing an act of kindness and mercy for one, who, like Duncan's widow, is forced to cry to her orphan children—

> 'The oak is fallen, the sapling bow
> Is all Duncraggon's shelter now.'

"Had you been present at the funeral of that hus-

band, you would be able to testify, as I can from personal observation, to the strength of the ties of good neighbourhood and good fellowship which bind Connaught hearts together. The abominable service of whisky at funerals is not there, which draws together many thirsty throats in districts of our own province; men and women come in large numbers, solemn and serious, to testify friendship for the living, and honour to the dead; each relation and intimate acquaintance enters the house of mourning with suitable expressions of sorrow, and, as Campbell says—

'Woman's softer soul in woe dissolves aloud.'

No hired mourning women are there, such as those to be found in some parts of Ulster, and such as the prophet Jeremiah refers to, when he says, 'Call for the mourning women that they may come, and send for cunning women, that they may come, and let them take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters.' The first time I heard the Irish cry in a part of county Down, it impressed me with the deepest solemnity and melancholy; but my feelings were turned to disgust and indignation, when I happened to look to the mourning women, and saw their levity. The funeral I lately attended in Connaught was orderly, solemn, deeply impressive—every countenance was pensive, every expression was sad, passengers stood silent and grave at the side of the road, till the cart containing the honoured remains was far away, and horsemen,

whatever their speed, reined in, and leaned pensive over the saddle, till the mournful procession passed by. There was no keening along the road, as is customary in the north, no women appointed to make melancholy melody in the dismal coronach; I feared, while I stood pensive and alone in the venerable graveyard of Easky, that in expectation of hearing the Irish cry, I had followed the funeral in vain. All at once, at my side, a woman, kneeling with her face down upon a grave, commenced the mournful wail; it was a wail of real woe for a departed friend, and forthwith the old ruined church and the whole field of graves resounded with loud and bitter lamentations, from wives, and sisters, and mothers, pouring forth the unrestrained sorrow of their hearts, over their beloved and honoured dead.

"Would I have deserved the name of man, if, amid such scenes as these, I had not deeply sympathised—had not given away so as to be obliged to borrow money for carrying me home—had I not resolved, in God's name, to appeal to the Christian public, as I have done, and as I now do again, lest many an Irish cry should rise, loud and wild, over whole families starved; lest, over whole districts, there should be none to kneel and wail upon the full grave, as the devouring pestilence crowded into the narrow house, what the murderous famine had spared.

"Brethren, I detain you no longer. I afflict your hearts and my own no more. I have come from the barren bog and the wild mountain glen, to present the

petition of the starving to the liberal and rich of prosperous Ulster, and more especially to those whose hearts the liberality of the gospel has enlarged. I come from the valley of the shadow of death to the world of light, and competence, and comfort, to cry on behalf of God's poor, to every one whom my voice can reach, 'If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday.'

"It is to me a subject of sincerest joy, that the first effort in Ulster on behalf of the Roman Catholics of Connaught, has been made by those who have also taken the lead in seeking their spiritual good—in supplying them with the bread from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall hunger no more. In answer to my former appeal, I have already received fifty pounds, and the collection this night will show our Connaught brethren, still more fully, that all our efforts on their behalf are prompted by love; that, therefore, they may trust us, that the religion which we teach them is a religion of love; and that the Bible which we put into their hands is the book in which God's own Spirit teaches many such a lesson as this—'Is not this the fast that I have chosen? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house; when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh.'"

Immediately after the conclusion of this address, a collection was taken up which amounted to £82.

Dr. Edgar forthwith made remittances to Mr. Rogers, Mr. Brannigan, and others whom he employed as his almoners. "I was instructed," says Mr. Brannigan, "to place £5 at the disposal of Dr. Feeny, the Roman Catholic bishop of Killala, resident at Ballina. The bishop was to furnish me with the names of those whom he considered most destitute. This he thankfully did through one of his curates. When taking my leave of him, he said he was just after reading Dr. Edgar's letter in the newspaper. The bishop then raised his hat, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, 'God bless Dr. Edgar, and may He give success to his appeal.'"

Knowing that these supplies would be very soon exhausted, and that the wants of the people of Connaught to whom he had access would require a continuous and extensive expenditure, he applied to ladies in the town and neighbourhood of Belfast, with whom he was acquainted, to assist him in the emergency. He did not seek their aid in vain. Throughout life he was very much indebted to female influence; and when he acknowledged his obligations to it, he was wont to kindle into enthusiasm. Nor were his female friends confined to one denomination. The late Mrs. Sturrock and her daughter the late Mrs. Dr. Reade—Episcopalians of high cultivation and great piety—the late Mrs. Murphy, an elderly matron of uncommon worth, a member of the Society of Friends; Miss Hamilton, of Mount Vernon, "the elect lady" of the Presbyterian church; and many others still living,

whom it might be invidious to characterize—supported him in all his labours of Catholic charity. His unflagging cheerfulness, his sparkling wit, his Christian generosity, his tried integrity, and his well-known wisdom and zeal, commended him to these excellent sisters in the Lord; and they rejoiced to recognise him as their leader in their works of benevolence. On the 22nd of October, 1846, the "Belfast Ladies' Relief Association for Connaught" was formed. Dr. Edgar was chosen President; Miss Hamilton was appointed Treasurer; and a large number of his worthy female friends cheerfully agreed to act on the Committee. With right good will they set to work in the collection of funds; and, before the end of the financial year, they were able to report that they had expended between £4,000 and £5,000 in rescuing the poor people of the west from starvation. This relief was distributed through various channels — some of the almoners being Roman Catholics, some Episcopalians, some Presbyterians, and some, members of other denominations.

Dr. Edgar did not stop here. Feeling that the land was under the pressure of a sore calamity, he appealed to the rich merchants of the capital of Ulster to assist him in his efforts for the help of his starving countrymen. The "Belfast Relief Fund for Ireland" was, in consequence, established. The late Andrew Mulholland, Esq., one of the chiefs of the mercantile aristocracy with whom he had much influence, headed the

subscription list with a donation of £200;* Richardson, Brothers, and Co. were forthcoming for the same sum. Dr. Edgar, himself, in addition to all that he had already contributed, subscribed £25. Thomas M'Clure, Esq., one of his steady friends, acted as Secretary, and the subscription list at length amounted to £16,000. This sum, administered judiciously by a Committee, of which Dr. Edgar was a member, did much to mitigate the distress of multitudes of the famishing in various parts of Ireland.

* The Mulhollands are among the few Irish Presbyterian families who have acquired wealth during the present century, and who, within the last five-and-twenty years, have passed over to the Established Church. Mr. Sinclair Mulholland, brother of Mr. Andrew Mulholland, was called after the Rev. *Sinclair* Kelburn, minister of Rosemary Street Presbyterian Church. Dr. Samuel Edgar, of Ballynahinch, was present at Mr. Andrew Mulholland's wedding, as one of the guests. Recently several Irish Episcopalians of high respectability have joined the Presbyterian Church.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CRY FROM CONNAUGHT—CONNAUGHT SCHOOLS—THE REV. JOHN EDMONDS VISITS CAMLIN—MR. T. Y. KILLEN—THE RECTOR STIRRED UP—REV. MATTHEW KERR AND REV. H. MAGEE—CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN DR. EDGAR AND MISS HOLMES — CLOGHER CHURCH AND SCHOOLS — GOOD FRUITS OF THE CONNAUGHT MISSION—MISS PRINGLE AND THE EDINBURGH LADIES' ASSOCIATION—THE CRY HEARD—OPPOSITION OF THE PRIESTS—REV. ROBERT ALLEN BECOMES SUPERINTENDENT OF THE CONNAUGHT MISSION.

T this time Dr. Edgar issued his well known tract, "A Cry from Connaught—appeal for a land that fainteth by reason of a famine of bread and of hearing the words of the Lord." It appeared first in the "Missionary Herald" of the Irish Presbyterian Church, for November, 1846. Twenty-six thousand copies of this little work were very soon put into circulation. The striking title, the clear and nervous style, the reports everywhere current relating to the loss of the potato crop, and the important facts disclosed in the narrative itself, all contributed to impart interest to this publication. Towards the commencement, the author thus refers to his visit for the inspection of the Irish Schools:—

"I gladly accompanied a loved brother in a tour

through a district of Connaught, to enable me to judge correctly of the extent of the sphere which that ill-fated province affords for benefitting the Irish through their mother tongue.

"The time was most unfavourable for the poor Irish teachers furnishing fair specimens of their schools, as the failure of the potato crop had spread a universal panic; gaunt famine was abroad, and the whole toil-worn population were improving the favourable weather for cutting and hurrying home their patches of corn.

"It was hard to take any of them from such work; and yet in the numbers who, at such a sacrifice, attended our examinations, I had evidence both of the hold which our teachers have on the affections of their pupils, and of the interest which Irish Scriptural education commands.

"In the district I visited there are 107 Irish schools, which furnished for examination, last inspection, 2,053 pupils, but not less than 5,000 are under instruction. A few statements respecting one of the schools which I examined will furnish ground for a correct judgment of the whole.

"The master and his wife, who is well qualified to assist him, are Roman Catholics—correct in their habits, enlightened, polite, and very kind. Both have been long employed as public teachers. He has 200 Irish scholars; upwards of seventy of them all able to read Irish, and nearly all to translate the Irish Scriptures well, were examined—every one giving evidence of having been carefully taught, and some of them

qualified to teach. Both males and females, numbers of them fathers and mothers, attended. A boy, seven years old, translated very well any part of the New Testament opened, and numbers of his seniors did the same. Fathers and their children were examined on the same passage—a respectable woman, her son, and daughter, all read together, and all read well. On another occasion, a brawny blacksmith and his apprentice, whom he had taught to read Irish, were examined together, and the master apologised for having allowed his apprentice to go a-head of him. Eight males were candidates for a premium for the best translation of the 4th chapter of John's Gospel, and the best answering on its truths and doctrines, as well as on the Old Testament history connected with the life of Jacob. Their answering was very good. Ten females were examined, in conversational Irish, on the doctrine of the atonement, and the nature of faith and good works. They acquitted themselves so respectably that Bibles were promised to five of them. In the whole of a long examination on the sense and doctrines of the Bible, I was not only gratified with the good conduct, good sense, and proficiency of the pupils, but surprised by the fact that there was not one stupid creature—not one blockhead among them; arising, I suppose, from the whole process in Irish schools being voluntary—the intelligent and enterprising alone volunteering, or, if others make a trial, soon falling away before the difficulties which present themselves in the outset. The work of an Irish school is no drudgery—there is

no need of the lash, no mitching—all are volunteers, full of life and zeal. One pupil, who read well, told me that he had commenced in the beginning of last winter; others said they read at home when they have time, because they like it well; the moment a new subject for a premium was announced, numbers commenced preparation; children not unfrequently teach their parents to read, and it is common for neighbours to go to the house of an Irish scholar, in the evening, to hear him read, by the light of a splinter of bogwood, some nice story out of the Irish Bible."

Almost all the Irish speaking population were quite uneducated, and these schools were intended to supply them with the elements of religious literature. The Bible was the schoolbook; but the teachers were generally Romanists; and none were obliged to conform to Protestantism that they might retain their appointments.

After giving a number of additional instances of the proficiency of those under examination, Dr. Edgar goes on to say of the people of Connaught :—

"Having made a successful appeal to the public to meet their temporal wants, I am anxious, still farther, to testify my gratitude and high sense of their many amiable qualities, by endeavouring to stir up the Church to a great and suitable effort for their spiritual welfare.

"It is a remarkable illustration of God's sovereignty, that, as in Ulster, Irish schools over a large district owe their origin to the fact of a beggar having found

an Irish Testament by the way-side; so those of Connaught may be traced to a single Bible which an English sportsman presented to a peasant. This Bible soon came into great request in a district where nothing of the kind had been previously seen; one, and another, and another still, borrowed the wonderful book, and neighbours gathered round the winter hearth to listen to its marvellous tales. Three connections of the man who first got it came out from Popery; one of them is the inspector of our Irish school system over a large district, and the brother of another teaches an Irish school. * * * * * What is more important, these teachers themselves, whose prejudices have been removed by friendship and kindness; these ardent young inquirers; these fathers and mothers of families; these venerable grandfathers—are all, according to the Irish school system, brought regularly under the religious instruction of Protestant superintendents, wise and holy men, and pre-eminently, in our schools, of one man whose services it is a privilege for any church to enjoy, and whose first wish is to win them to God. Let no man, therefore, cry in despair, 'Romanism in Ireland is within walls of brass, and to her hopeless prisoners there is no access.' It is not true; my own experience contradicts it, and so may the experience of any qualified man. I had not only cordial welcome to enter whatever families of the poor I chose, and converse freely on what subjects I chose, but hundreds of Roman Catholics assembled in different places for the purpose of meeting me; and from

no audiences have I received more respectful attention or kinder regard. Every opportunity for reproving, rebuking, exhorting, with all long-suffering and doctrine, which a minister of Christ could desire, I enjoyed; nay, more, when an announcement was made of my intention of preaching in a wild district, on Sabbath, 'straightway,' as is recorded in the history of Jesus, 'many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them—no, not so much as about the door;' and to Roman Catholics and Protestants, in equal numbers, I preached the word."

Dr. Edgar was impressed with the conviction that "an effectual door" was now opened among the poor Romanists of the west for the entrance of the gospel; that the Irish General Assembly should address itself in right earnest to this work of evangelization; and that the Rev. Robert Allen, to whom he refers in the preceding extract, should be loosed from the charge of Stewartstown congregation, and set apart as superintendent of the Connaught mission. In the following interesting and eloquent passage he gives utterance to these views :—

"While preaching in Connaught I forgot college learning, and bid my hearers not inquire whether I was a priest or a parson, but simply decide for themselves whether what I said was agreeable to common sense, and the meaning of God's own Book. Then, after advising them never to change their religion to please any man, or forsake it till convinced it was false, and assuring them that I attached no value to

conversions unless sincere, I placed before them, in the simplest forms, the supreme authority of God's Word—the plan of salvation by the righteousness of Christ—justification by free grace, through faith, and the duty of an immediate and unreserved acceptance of Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient and only Saviour. These saving truths I had an opportunity of preaching to large audiences whenever I pleased. The only thing necessary was to give an Irish teacher notice, and forthwith went out the gathering cry which summoned to the muster-place a crowd of both sexes and all ages, who listened with devout attention, only interrupted by exclamations of 'That's God's truth!'—'that's Scripture!'—'long life to your reverence!' &c.; and though taken from their reaping in mid-harvest, they remained with patience, and left with polite expressions of gratitude. In fact the whole land was before me more fully than if Rome had said, 'If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left;' for through a whole district, of five-and-twenty miles in length, there is not a single chapel, church, or place of worship of any kind; the people are Romanists, but, except once a year, when the priest collects his twenty sheaves from each farmer, the face of a man professing to be in holy orders is never seen. To the shame of the Christian Church, to the disgrace, especially of the Presbyterian Church, be it told, that in this same district there were seven Presbyterian congregations, which are all gone; the good

old Presbyterian names still living in the heart of Romanism, being the only testimony for the faithfulness of the past—the only protest before high heaven against this degenerate and spiritless age!

"God of our fathers! (I might have cried amidst old Presbyterian graves), hast thou none in Presbyterian Ireland, or in the Free Church of Scotland, to take up the mantle of the faithful minister who, in days of primitive zeal, carried around this district, so desolate now, the consolations of the Gospel of God? Is there not one to bind to his belt a copy of the Irish Bible, still preserved, which this old patriarch carried, as from house to house he told the tale, oft repeated, yet ever new, that there is only one safe way into eternity—one rod and staff of comfort in death—one companion of the way, who can give the charm of society to death, and light up the darkness of the grave—and that companion is Jesus! By the good hand of the Lord upon us, the Irish Presbyterian Church has a man in every respect qualified for such a sphere; and had she estimated aright his worth, or her own and her Master's interests, she would, long since, have dedicated him to a work for which he is so eminently qualified. It is a subject of hearty congratulation that he is willing to devote a portion of his time to the management of the Assembly's Irish schools, and it remains now to provide for him the men and the means for occupying the field which a generous Providence offers."

The Irish schools did much to diffuse a knowledge

of the Word of God; but Mr. Brannigan, their Connaught superintendent, soon became convinced that English schools, conducted on Scriptural principles, and taught by competent instructors, would be much more useful. With assistance obtained from friends in various quarters, he accordingly laboured to carry out his views; and before the end of the year 1847, he had established in Sligo and Mayo twenty-one English schools, attended by 1,700 scholars—most of whom were Roman Catholics. Whilst the pupils in these seminaries were furnished with a knowledge of the ordinary branches of an English education, they were also introduced to the Bible, trained to study it carefully, and accustomed to commit to memory the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly.

In the beginning of 1847, Mr. Brannigan obtained encouragement to attempt another scheme for the improvement of Connaught. In the month of January of that year two good Dublin ladies, anxious that the young females of the west should be trained to habits of industry, proposed to pay the salary of a mistress qualified to give them instruction in the embroidery of muslin. Mr. Brannigan was told that the muslin could be procured in Belfast; and, as he understood that a matron who attended his missionary station at Ballinglen was conversant with the required department of needle-work, he anticipated little difficulty in making the necessary arrangements. Setting out forthwith, for the north, he stated his case, on his arrival there, to Dr. Edgar, who at once conducted him to a warehouse,

where a quantity of muslin sufficient to supply a school and test the abilities of the teacher, was placed at his disposal. The result of the experiment was not, however, satisfactory. When the work was returned from the school, it was condemned; the teacher was pronounced incompetent; and Mr. Brannigan's hopes from the sewed muslin were blighted in the bud. But Dr. Edgar had received a hint which he soon turned to excellent account. It immediately occurred to him that, if properly qualified mistresses were sent to Connaught, the females could thus be fitted for remunerative industrial occupation. He lost no time in communicating his ideas to the Ladies' Committee, and they promptly announced to their friends that they no longer intended to confine themselves to the mere distribution of food to the hungry. This modification of the object of the association was notified in the following circular :—

"*Proposed Extension and Permanent Operation of the Belfast Ladies' Association for Connaught.*

"The Belfast Ladies' Relief Association for Connaught having expressed an anxious wish to be employed as agents for carrying forward plans of extensive permanent usefulness in Connaught, and feeling this anxiety increase as they gain more ample knowledge of the state of their unhappy country, propose to add to their effort for obtaining food for the famishing, an extensive permanent system of industrial instruction, for enabling the pupils to provide support for themselves.

" 1. For this purpose, they propose to found and support as many schools of industry, for females, as the means obtained shall warrant.

" 2. That diligence be used to obtain mistresses for these schools possessing high qualifications for the office, cultivated minds, good manners, religious, and unblemished moral character; and that such salaries be paid to them as shall enable them to devote their whole time and energies to their appropriate duties.

" 3. That the industrial instruction in the schools shall be such as is best calculated to secure good habits, and proper mental training; and that the employments in which the scholars shall be prepared to earn a livelihood, shall be of a useful domestic character; the means and materials for which can be easily procured.

" 4. That a main object of the whole system be to imbue the minds of the scholars with the truth and spirit of the gospel; and with this view, that those of the pupils unable to read, be taught to read the Bible; and that a portion of time each day be occupied in reading the Holy Scriptures, but that no sectarian exclusive principles, or the catechism of any section of the Christian Church, be taught in the schools.

" 5. That for effectively managing the system thus proposed, the schools of each district be placed under the superintendence of one or more resident ladies of active benevolence and piety.

" The preceding proposals have been submitted to

the deliberate and anxious consideration of the Association, who are unanimous in their approval of them; and, though the system has not yet been formally adopted or acted on, they will be rejoiced to be furnished with evidence that it is esteemed worthy of general and generous support.

"It is unnecessary to add that no money contributed for food will be applied to any other purpose."

A supply of well-qualified mistresses, chiefly from the county of Down, was soon provided; and, in the course of the year 1847, the Belfast Ladies' Association established in Connaught a considerable number of Industrial Schools, where, in connection with Scriptural instruction, young females were taught knitting and embroidery. Each school, as indicated in the preceding circular, was placed under the care of a lady superintendent; the superintendent was expected to provide a schoolhouse, and—when the earlier appointments were made—to select a suitable lodging for the teacher. By far the majority of the superintendents were members of the United Church of England and Ireland; but some of them belonged to other communions.

A still higher agency was soon introduced. A superintendent, who lived a few miles from Boyle, and who had kindly undertaken to assist in distributing the rations of food obtained from the Belfast Association, wrote to Dr. Edgar, saying, "You have been giving us the bread that perisheth—could you not also

procure for us a supply of the meat that endureth to everlasting life?" Her correspondent did not forget this inquiry. Meeting, a few days afterwards, the Rev. John Edmonds, of Tully, who had arrived in Belfast on some missionary errand, and discovering that his church was only some thirty miles distant from the lady's residence, he mentioned the application, and recommended him to visit the district. On his return to county Longford, Mr. Edmonds lost no time in repairing to Camlin, where he found the famishing multitudes most willing to listen to the preaching of the gospel. When reporting the result to Dr. Edgar, he stated his conviction that the arrival of a minister to commence a regular service, in a place where Presbyterianism was unknown, would at once rouse the opposition of both the Rector and the parish Priest. He suggested that, in the first instance, it would be expedient to employ some prudent theological student, who could spend two or three months on a visit of experiment, and meanwhile perform some missionary duty. Mr. T. Y. Killen,* then a member of the Divinity class, was selected for this service; and at the close of the Session of 1846-7 was strongly urged to undertake it. Mr. Killen replied that the employment was congenial, but that his health was delicate; and that, as he might find it impossible to procure comfortable accommodation in such a wild country as Connaught, he was somewhat afraid to venture on the mission. A few days after his return from college, he

* Now Minister of Duncairn Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

received from Dr. Edgar the following characteristic letter:—

"Belfast, May 3rd, 1847.

"Dear Killen,—You can't bear damp sheets, or eat anything simpler to your breakfast than buttered toast or sallylun. So be it. You shall not escape on that score. Read the enclosed [a letter from Camlin] from a truly pious and generous widow—with a large estate; an Episcopalian—yet giving cordial support to Presbyterians—herself supporting an Irish Scripture-reader—surrounded by thousands of Papists willing to hear God's truth, and herself offering you all the comforts her splendid mansion affords. And if you can resist an appeal now made to you to go and do three months' missionary work—the most I am sorry to say we can do is, to excommunicate you from all Christian sympathy. Let me hear from you at once.—Yours very truly,

"John Edgar."

When Mr. Killen received this communication, he was obliged to surrender at discretion; and, immediately setting about preparation for his journey, arrived at Camlin about ten days afterwards. The whole country was then in a most wretched condition. Multitudes were dependent for their daily bread on the rations provided for them by public charity; and not a few of the poor people were accustomed to spend the greater part of their time in bed in their miserable

abodes; as they had ascertained that the appetite was thus impaired, and that they could in this way contrive to linger out existence on a more slender allowance of food. Mr. Killen spent three months on this mission, during which he was employed in visiting from house to house, teaching a Sabbath-school, looking after day-schools, preparing a class of converts to discuss the various points of the Romish controversy, and holding prayer meetings. Before his arrival, the Protestant incumbent had been importuned in vain to conduct a Sabbath service in the Camlin Schoolhouse—distant about five miles from the Parish Church—but, when he heard of the appearance of the stranger from the north, his Episcopal zeal took fire, and he forthwith announced his intention to commence preaching. Selecting as his hour of worship the same which Mr. Killen had already fixed on for his prayer meeting, he contrived, for the time being, to eject the Belfast student from the schoolhouse. So soon did the appearance of Presbyterianism in this part of Connaught prove a benefit to the Establishment, for it had already roused at least one of its ministers to some little ecclesiastical activity.

At the close of the collegiate session of 1847–8, three students then ready for license—Mr. T. Y. Killen, Mr. Matthew Kerr, and Mr. Hamilton Magee—informed Dr. Edgar that they were willing for a time to devote themselves to missionary work in Connaught. He gladly received this communication; and, soon afterwards, Mr. Killen repaired to Camlin, Mr. Kerr

to Dromore West, and Mr. Magee to Killala. A Presbyterian Church has since been erected at Boyle, in the neighbourhood of Camlin; another at Roscommon; and another at Dromore West; and ministers are now settled in all these places. A congregation had long before been established at Killala, where Mr. Magee assisted the aged pastor, Mr. Rogers, and performed missionary duty.

In the month of October, 1847, an application for a mistress to teach an industrial school was presented to the Belfast Ladies' Association, from Clogher, Ballaghaderin. The arrival of this communication created no small perplexity, for the handwriting was somewhat peculiar; and no member of the committee could undertake to pronounce the name of the town from which it emanated. But, notwithstanding, the Post Office "Directory" attested that such a place existed in the province of Connaught; and the letter commended itself by its good sense and excellent spirit. Dr. Edgar, however, did not wish to commit himself to a correspondent of whom he knew nothing, and accordingly returned the following reply:—

"*Belfast Ladies' Relief Association for Connaught.*

"Belfast, Oct. 29th, 1847.

"DEAR MADAM,—I like your honest patriarchal handwriting, but I must know more of you before I entrust one of my precious schoolmistresses to you. Have the kindness to let me know a little more of yourself and your ways; and I shall believe all you

say good of yourself. I help my friends, and as I have lost many good old ones this year, I should like to make some good new ones.—Yours truly,

"JOHN EDGAR, D.D.,
"*Professor of Divinity, and Home Secretary*
"*to the Irish Presbyterian Church.*"

The lady, in reply, furnished such information as she deemed necessary; but her letter rather increased than satisfied Dr. Edgar's curiosity. She stated, farther, that she was desirous to obtain from him a preacher, as well as a schoolmistress. To this new application, he sent the following hurried answer:

"Belfast, Nov. 5.

"DEAR MRS. HOLMES,—I don't know what I might do for you as Secretary of the Presbyterian Home Mission in sending you preaching, but in my connection with the Connaught Association, I know no sect or church.

"Could you give a free schoolroom, and ensure me that the board and lodging of a mistress in a decent Protestant family will not cost above —— weekly—or that she can get a very cheap furnished lodging, and board herself? If so, I shall send you a mistress, and pay her salary and other expenses.—Yours truly,

"JOHN EDGAR."

The College session had now commenced; and the duties of his class, combined with other engagements,

absorbed his attention; for though his correspondent informed him that she was prepared to supply the required accommodation to the teacher, he seems to have either mislaid or overlooked her communication. The lady wrote again, reminding him of his promise, and wishing to know why the mistress had not made her appearance. She then received the subjoined reply :—

"Belfast, Dec. 23rd, 1847.

"Dear Madam,—Your venerable manuscript rose before our committee to-day like a ghost. We have short memories, and had forgotten all traces of a promise to you. However, you had better keep us to it.

* * * * * *

Our geography is utterly at fault about this awfully unpronouncable place of yours. Where do you live, anyhow? There is no use of our setting up a school for you unless you have some easy mode of conveyance, and unless you have some other schools near you.—Yours ever truly,

"John Edgar."

The lady now supplied him with a particular account of the geographical position of Ballaghaderin, and again applied for a preacher, as well as an industrial school-teacher. The annexed answer speedily reached her :—

"My very good Patriarch,—You don't know what you are doing at all when you are asking me to

send a preacher. You don't know that I am a black-mouthed Presbyterian of the same kidney as the Free Church of Scotland, and were I to send you such a preacher as I have control over, as honorary secretary of the Irish Presbyterian Church, I would raise about your ears a hornet's nest of Puseyite Episcopalians—and for anything I know, set your cap in a blaze.

"I sent a missionary to live in the house of one of your good Episcopalian Connaught ladies, after giving her fair warning of the storm she was blowing against herself, and such has been the hunting, boring, and badgering that she has got from archdeacon—aye, bishop—down to the rector, that if she had not the courage of seven lions, she would have been put to the rout long since. You will see, therefore, it was a regard to your peace that kept me silent. But I must see and send you a God-fearing mistress shortly.—Yours ever,

"JOHN EDGAR."

This answer did not at all intimidate his resolute correspondent. Bent on obtaining a supply of Presbyterian ordinances, she again repeated her application. The following was his reply :—

"Belfast, Jan. 14th, 1848.

"MY DEAR MRS. HOLMES,—You do excite my curiosity marvellously. My other Connaught ladies are all so communicative that in a few letters I learn all about themselves, their husbands, and their families; but except from your old Abrahamic penmanship, so

aristocratic and so venerable, I can make no guess at anything except that you possess the spirit of genuine Christian charity, and I most potently desire to scrape up a closer acquaintance with you. Suppose I should be with my good friend ———, on the top of what coach would I mount, or car, to take a look in at you? Could you get me a Romanist audience were I with you? * * * * *

Mrs. ——— sent me in the beginning of our acquaintance just such an application as I got from you, and received from me the same reply as you. What creates such interest in your present letter is, that it is exactly the same as what I got from ———. Well, I sent her a very fine fellow—one of my own students, who lived in her own house, and preached and worked for her to her heart's content. After he was obliged to leave, I sent her one of our Belfast town missionaries; but when two months since I was with the Free Church in Scotland, they promised me to send a missionary to Boyle. A right good one has been there for six weeks, and I had sent my man to supply his pulpit in Scotland; but to my great chagrin I received a letter the other day from Moody Stuart, stating that he could not continue to supply Boyle because the Sabbath ministrations were merely for the benefit of Protestants. His missionary was with me here to-day, on his road home, and I urged him to go to Stuart, and press on him the necessity of keeping up Boyle as a missionary station. Your letter comes in good time to-night, and I have enclosed a copy of

it to Moody Stuart for urging the claim of your part of the west. * * * * —Yours ever truly,

"JOHN EDGAR."

Seeing now some prospect of succeeding in the object she had so much at heart, his correspondent began to be a little more communicative, and gave him to understand that she was a middle-aged unmarried lady, and not the venerable personage he had all along supposed. She was, indeed, as many can testify, in the full possession of all her faculties, and quite able to display as much activity as himself when any work of benevolence was to be executed. On making this discovery, he addressed to her the annexed explanation:—

"Belfast, Feb. 7th, 1848.

"MY DEAR MISS HOLMES,— * * * * I enjoyed a hearty laugh at your announcement of my blunder concerning you, but the fact is you write such a patriarchal hand that our Committee and I looked on it with such reverence that we could not associate it with any thing less than a great grandmother.

"Married or single, you still hold the same high place in my very sincere regards.—Yours ever, most truly,

"JOHN EDGAR."

The lady introduced to Dr. Edgar under such mysterious circumstances eventually became one of his most attached friends. Her benefactions to the Con-

naught Mission have been of a princely character. Her brother, Joseph Holmes, Esq., J.P., D.L., has granted to the Irish Presbyterian Church two acres of ground, free of rent in perpetuity, on which his sister has erected, at an expense of £2000, a church, a manse, a school-house, and other accommodations. In his last report to the Assembly, as Secretary of the Roman Catholic Mission—the report of 1866—Dr. Edgar bears emphatic testimony to the good fruits of her benevolent expenditure. "There are those," says he, "even among the liberal supporters of our own Home Mission, who make no secret of their unbelief in the conversion of Romanists. . . . We invite all vexed with any doubt on so grave a subject, to examine for themselves among the scholars and teachers of our schools. . . . Let them inquire what is the character, compared with their neighbours, of those trained in our schools; what are the numbers of secret inquirers, and of avowed converts; how many children of mixed marriages have been saved to Protestantism; how many possess and prize the Bible; how many are now filling important situations, sent forth as converts from our schools. . . . How many poor dying Romanists refused the priest, and triumphed in Christ to the last. Let them obtain honest information on such subjects as these, and we stand by the issue, *even should they confine themselves to the Clogher station alone.*"

We have already seen how Dr. Edgar was supported by members of the Society of Friends when prosecuting

the Temperance Reformation. From the same quarter he received most important aid in the days of the Connaught famine. The Friends, also, entered warmly into the scheme for establishing Industrial Schools, and their Central Committee in Dublin agreed to give £500 to the Belfast ladies, on the condition that the same amount would be raised by their Association. This condition was soon accomplished. Contributions arrived from other sources. An Association in Edinburgh, conducted by Miss Pringle, afforded large assistance, and continued to take a deep interest in the improvement of the west of Ireland. Dr. Edgar's published statements, relative to the famine, soon crossed the Atlantic, and originated collections in New York for the starving population. He, himself, obtained, from friends in the United States, considerable sums to be appropriated to the improvement of Connaught.

The Industrial Schools of the Belfast Ladies' Association soon began to realise the hopes of their founders. They diffused Scriptural light, promoted the cultivation of good habits, and enabled poor females to earn something for the support of themselves and those connected with them. "The children are improved beyond my expectation in every way," said one of the patronesses, shortly after their formation. "They are become so civilised, so neat and clean, and are so raised from the state of ignorance and poverty they were in, that it is most gratifying and encouraging. The young children all repeat hymns, and we strive to make them under-

stand what they read and learn. The adults, who did not know even their letters, and came only to work, begged to be taught to read their Bible. The girls were all delighted with their payment last week. Some of them took home their little earnings, and bought meal for their parents. It brought tears to my eyes to see the delight with which they held in their hands a sixpence or a shilling, the first-fruits of their own earnings. What a feeling it gives to see the poor relieved, in connexion with their own efforts, and to know that the good received is lasting for both the body and mind!"

Towards the close of 1847, Dr. Edgar published a tract entitled "Connaught—Spiritual and Temporal—The Cry Heard"—in which he reported the result of his former appeal. Large sums had been placed at his disposal to aid in relieving distress and in carrying out his evangelistic operations. Lord Lurgan, Lord Roden, and other noble personages who had read "The Cry," hastened to send him contributions. A remittance of £50 was received from an anonymous giver, with a request that he would use it as he pleased for the good of souls in Connaught. A lady in London, whose name he could scarcely pronounce, twice forwarded donations. On a public occasion, when speaking of the ravages of famine in the west, he happened to allude to the fate of Connaught Rangers left to die of hunger after all their warlike fame. As he retired from the meeting, a gentleman said to him, —"You touched my heart when you talked of the

Connaught Rangers, for my poor brother was one of them;" and, putting a sheaf of bank-notes into his hands, desired him to take out twenty pounds.

The priests soon began to feel the influence of the Connaught Mission, and yet attempted in vain to put it down. "The children attend the Scriptural schools," "says Dr. Edgar, "and no priest can fray them away. Every Sabbath, Presbyterian ministers are preaching to large congregations; and when lately a priest came bellowing and brandishing his whip into the centre of a crowd of Roman Catholics, to whom a minister of the Free Church of Scotland was preaching, the people manfully stood their ground, remonstrated with the enraged priest, and remained to listen to God's blessed word, when he retreated, disappointed and foiled. On a similar occasion, when two priests attended to disturb public worship, one of them in vain commanded his people to withdraw: he and his companion withdrew in disgrace, but the people remained." Even the Roman Catholic Bishop of Killala, who, in the beginning of the famine had bestowed on Dr. Edgar his Episcopal blessing, changed his tone, and turned persecutor.

The Edinburgh ladies soon saw the importance of having a minister of experience in the west of Ireland, in whose zeal and discretion they could have confidence; they earnestly urged the entire dedication of the Rev. Robert Allen to this new field of labour; and by undertaking to raise a large portion of his salary, they surmounted at least one great difficulty in the way

of his removal. In 1848 he resigned the charge of the Stewartstown congregation, and entered on his duties as Superintendent of the Connaught Mission. The completion of an arrangement which Dr. Edgar had so long desired, and which he had so strongly recommended in "The Cry," gave him no ordinary satisfaction. Mr. Allen remained in this situation till his death, in April, 1865. He was truly a Christian gentleman; he did much, unostentatiously, for the benefit of his generation; and by sound judgment and untiring vigilance, contributed greatly to the prosperity of the Connaught Mission.

CHAPTER XII.

TESTIMONIAL AND ADDRESS TO DR. EDGAR—HIS REPLY—PRESENTATION FROM ALFRED STREET CONGREGATION—REV. GEORGE SHAW—CONNAUGHT WORK AT THE GREAT EXHIBITION—LINEN WEAVING IN CO. LEITRIM—THE BAZAARS—MR. D. K. CLARKE—PROPOSED PRESENTATION FROM THE CONNAUGHT LADIES—TRACTS ON THE SABBATH—PRESBYTERIAN PRIVILEGE AND DUTY—ATTACKS ON IT—REV. DR. URWICK.

SHORTLY after Dr. Edgar resigned his pastoral charge in 1848, his friends began to discuss the propriety of marking their appreciation of his public services by some substantial testimonial. His recent exertions on behalf of Connaught had excited general admiration; and many beyond the bounds of his own church were quite prepared to join in such a tribute of acknowledgment. A subscription list was accordingly opened, and a handsome sum soon collected. Towards the close of the year 1849, when the gift was ready for presentation, a goodly company of his friends assembled in the large room, Donegall Place Buildings, to celebrate the occasion. After tea, the Rev. Professor Gibson was moved into the chair, and the following address read :—

"Rev. and Dear Sir,—It is now nearly thirty years since, in the providence of God, you entered on a sphere of public usefulness, in connexion with the religious interests of the metropolis of Ulster. During that period you have occupied a position of no ordinary prominence and influence, and your manner of life and course of action have been subjected to the scrutiny, not only of your fellow-townsmen, but of the entire community of the north of Ireland. We stand before you, in obedience to the call of those who have been no indifferent spectators of your career, to attest the estimate which they have formed at once of your personal character and public conduct.

"In adverting to the leading features of a life which has been distinguished, in a remarkable degree, by the energetic prosecution of great and noble objects, we shall not dwell upon those high qualities which, in that section of the Church with which you are identified, have shed a moral lustre around your name. Associated, as we severally are, with different denominations of evangelical Christians, we feel a peculiar gratification in referring rather to your varied and arduous labours on behalf of the common cause of humanity and religion. We rejoice in recognising you as the originator of moral and spiritual movements, whose operation has been circumscribed by no denominational distinctions, and which have carried in their train inestimable blessings to all classes of your fellow-men. We congratulate you on having witnessed the happy fruits of your self-denying toil;

and we unite in thanksgiving to the Giver of all good, who has upheld you to this day, and poured into your cup, while prosecuting the walks of an enlarged philanthropy, so many elements of pure and permanent enjoyment.

" Many years have passed away since you first unfurled in Ulster the standard of Christian temperance. With an intrepidity, which was severely tried by apathy and opposition, you urged forward the important undertaking, scattering far and wide the seeds of a reform pregnant with blessing to your native land. All ranks and classes in the community were roused by the resistless potency of your appeals, while even those who were not won by them did homage to your fervid and philanthropic genius. The public mind of England was awakened to the magnitude of the theme, and the British Parliament pronounced its well-weighed testimony in favour of the cause which had enlisted your unbought advocacy. A healthy tone of public sentiment was created—a practical amelioration in the tastes and habits of society was extensively witnessed —and scenes of domestic peace and piety sprung up in many a family which before had been the dark abode of penury and woe. A triumph so illustrious, much as it may call forth the eulogy of others, must ever prove to him who has achieved it his richest compensation.

" We cannot here refer successively to the many other schemes of general utility in which you have long borne an active and an honourable part. To

enumerate these it would be necessary that we should take up in detail every philanthropic and religious object which, for the last quarter of a century, has engaged the attention of the community. In some departments of effort—as in the case of the Sailor's Friend, the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind, and Bible Societies, and the Town Mission—you enjoyed the benefit of valuable and efficient co-operation; but in others—as in the re-organisation of the Tract Society, and the establishment of the Ulster Penitentiary—the field of labour may be said to have been all your own. Who will refuse especially to accord to you the honour of undertaking to provide a refuge for the forsaken outcast, weary of the ways of sin and shame? or hesitate to testify that, through your single-handed and persevering agency, a glad asylum for the unhappy wanderer has been reared, within whose walls your name is treasured as a household word, in hearts reclaimed to purity and virtue? As long as Christian chastity is precious, so long will your exertions in a cause so sacred be inscribed in that bright page which records its triumphs.

" Of the many important enterprises with which you have been connected, none claims more honourable mention at our hands than that which, within the last few years, has had its origin in the afflicted circumstances of our own land. When the wail of famine in the south and west of Ireland reached our highly-favoured province, it is well known that your voice was the first in Ulster to respond to the imploring cry, and

to evoke that sympathy whose practical expression carried light and joy to many a dreary dwelling, and saved so many thousands of our countrymen from an untimely grave. The thrilling tale you told was borne across the wide Atlantic, and, as under the touch of a master-hand, the fountain of a generous liberality was opened, and flowed forth in a tide of blessing to our shores. The bounty you elicited was a welcome boon, and no religious diversities were allowed to tarnish its pure administration. The famine past, you bent your energies to form industrial and religious habits among those whom you had furnished with the means of temporal subsistence. Your labours here have, by the Divine blessing, been crowned with a large measure of success, and yours is now the satisfaction of witnessing the operation of a system which has already told upon the best interests of your country, and which, as we believe, is fraught with benefits of inestimable value to other generations.

"Infirmity and imperfection are inseparable from all the works of man, and strange fire will mingle with his purest offerings; but we rejoice to think that, while in labours you have been so abundant, your operations have been conducted in a spirit worthy of the high calling of a minister of Christ. In the warfare you have waged, you have resorted to no carnal weapons; in the triumphs you have won, you have not defiled your garments on the arena of secular partizanship.

"As a recognition of your services, and of the debt

of obligation under which you have laid your generation, we solicit your acceptance of the accompanying present, consisting of a copy of Bagster's Polyglot Bible, and the sum of £800. It is a willing, and, as we conceive, not inappropriate tribute to your character and labours. While you have consecrated your time, talents, and influence to every cause which patriotism and piety hold dear, we bear you record that you have not been less liberal in your pecuniary contributions. Your large-hearted generosity in this respect has often called forth universal admiration; while it has furnished a splendid exemplification of the lessons you have taught, and stimulated, as by a powerful impulse, the liberality of others.

"Go on in that noble career, in prosecuting which you have a higher than any human honour or reward, and may you be long preserved to your family and friends, your Church and country. May blessings manifold attend you here, and when your work is ended, may you enter into peace, exchanging the turmoil and toil of earth for the repose and blessedness of heaven!"

What a change had twenty-nine years witnessed! When the young pastor entered on public life, he was frowned on by the other ministers of the town, and some of them sought to thwart him when endeavouring to obtain an endowment for his congregation. He was obliged to travel through England and Scotland to collect the £500 required to build his little meet-

ing-house. Now, his friends voluntarily handed him a much larger sum for his own use. Then, he preached in a hired room in an obscure court; now, he was generally recognised as one of the most influential men in Ulster. Among the largest contributors to his testimonial were many individuals not connected with the Presbyterian Church, including the Hon. Judge Crampton, John Owden, Esq., Dr. Andrews, of Queen's College, and S. G. Fenton, Esq. No wonder that he felt complimented by such a presentation. In the fulness of his heart he returned the following reply:—

"MR. CHAIRMAN,—Did I regard the mere pecuniary value of your munificent gift, I could afford to say, as Esau to Jacob, 'I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself;' because, though thrown early on my own resources, my grievance has never been the want of money, but the want of wisdom or will to use it well. Your gift is the pledge and testimony of sincere friendship, and I consider its value as an index of the number and kindness of my friends, and of what they are willing to do, did I need their aid. I receive it with gratitude, not because it makes me rich, and brings honour and happiness to myself and those whom I love, but chiefly because of the source from which it comes, the lessons it teaches, and the moral power it is fitted to wield.

"I have often received similar favours—from my congregation, from my students, from public bodies,

from private friends at home and abroad—but there is much about this one to create in my life a new era, prompt to new zeal and benevolence, and bind me closer to fellow-Christians of many names.

"Men of conflicting sentiments are unanimous in complimenting one whose zeal against their own sect some of them have perhaps often condemned; and though he is leader of no party, so that in honouring him they might exalt themselves—though he can promise nothing but gratitude—they generously applaud the struggles of one who came among them an unknown school-boy, who commenced his ministry in a room in one of their lanes; and who, after his full share of opposition and difficulty, occupies a place, in the presence of all his brethren, which gives opportunity at least for extensive good.

"This gift is to me invaluable, because it is a generous expression of friendship from school-fellows, from trusty companions, from fellow-labourers, from brother ministers, from males and females of different ranks and creeds, whose friendship I have long most highly prized, to whom I am already deeply in debt, and whose names and praise are in all the churches, as the wise, the generous, and the good. Praise is valuable, when falling from lips too pure to flatter, when bestowed by those who largely deserve the commendation which they give.

"They who have longest borne with my infirmities and follies are the first to do me honour; those of whose charity I have been but a dispenser, and to

whose noble benevolence I have been a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water, attribute honour and success to me, which are justly their own.

"No man, therefore, shall stop me of this boasting, that none can be more deeply indebted than I to a multitude of friends, who are daily increasing their kindness, and thus daily increasing my debt.

"Here, in honest truth, is the secret of a chief part of any little prominence or notoriety I have gained; my friends committed to me trusts, to which I would not have dared to aspire. I had their countenance, and prayers, and help; so that not only have I been thus successful in every enterprise, but never have I, in any instance, known what it was to be in want of sufficient funds.

"Little credit, therefore, is due to me for having begged for the cause of religion in Switzerland and Germany; to have built two houses of worship for myself, and helped to raise funds for others; to have taken part in erecting a chapel for sailors, a penitentiary, and two houses in succession for deaf mutes and the blind, when all I had to do was to ask and have. Could I have dared to hope that my hurried letter from Mulaferry would issue, not merely in the collection of £16,000 for alleviating distress in Ireland, but in the establishment of a noble institution for the industrial and Scriptural education of females in Connaught, which has already established there the manufacture of sewed muslin, and effected such a change, that the pupils, for example, of a single school, who

till lately were ignorant of all industry, instead of paying for education, earned last quarter seventeen pounds?

"There are rewards of a gracious Providence to those who do His work, above all that money could buy. Such are they which my brother secretaries of the Belfast Town Mission enjoy, when witnessing how it has grown and flourished by the blessing of God, so that one of its six agents, lately ordained, has taken from his station to his church forty-five families who had been in no church communion whatever. Such, too, are the rewards enjoyed by those who fought and conquered for the freedom of the slave—who, with my brother-delegate to the Anti-Slavery Convention, besieged the doors of members of Parliament, demanding the negro's rights, and who live now, after Britain has proclaimed all her subjects free; the question for controversy no longer being—Are blacks and whites of the same species? Should emancipation take place gradually, or at once? but, should a slaveholder be recognised as a Christian at all?

"There is still a higher reward than to have one's own history interwoven with the history of the enlightenment, advancement, and emancipation of his race; there is a pure and quiet joy of the heart with which the stranger does not intermeddle. Let the praise be to Him to whom alone it is due, if I have felt such joy, while meeting the reformed drunkard in the honoured walks of life, or the restored victim of seduction in the happy family circle, or while hearing good of

servants, little dowries for whom I hold, of wages earned by them in the Penitentiary.

"The value of this Testimonial will be much increased, should it convey to my own children, or students, or indeed to any, lessons of wisdom. My life will not have been useless, if it has taught that neither genius nor fortune is necessary for making a man prosperous or useful, and that it is no discredit to be a self-made man.

"It will be peculiarly complimentary, should any be persuaded, that the union of so many in conferring honour on one, is intended to teach that outspoken honesty makes no bitter foes, but fast friends; and that prompt liberality makes rich, instead of tending to poverty. All the bread I have cast on the waters comes floating back in a single day; and had I given fourfold for my brother's good, this night would show that good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, have men given into my bosom. But what though no crumb had ever returned, was charity lost, was the inheritance of my children impoverished by ought that their father gave? Not at all. In the hearts of the poor, in the friendship of such as surround me now, they have an inheritance which wealth could not buy; to each of them, in my last hour, I can say—Thy own friend and thy father's friend forsake not; for the kindly regard of the good to your father's memory will be to you a legacy of good, which the churl and the iron-hearted miser cannot bequeath.

"This meeting will not be fruitless, if it teach that the day of small things is not to be despised, and that no darkness, or difficulty, or opposition should tempt to despair. Had the friends who worked with me despaired when the Ulster Tract Society was without shop or stock, and deep in debt, and dead, we would not have seen it flourishing, though self-supported, and occupying a depository in the principal square of Belfast. Had my beloved brother secretary of the Temperance Society despaired, when Lord Althorp laughed us to scorn, telling us, that we might as well expect to turn St. Stephen's inside out, as carry a motion for a Parliamentary inquiry on drunkenness, we would not have seen the force of public opinion carrying that motion, in spite of Lord Althorp and the British ministry, and appointing a committee which collected and established a mass of important truth, that must live and be influential so long as science and morality live.

"Christian friends, your gift is suitable, simple, significant—a Bible, God's Word, not man's—an inspired revelation in many languages, original and translated. It bids me maintain its primitive purity, and help to give it in all languages, open and free to all mankind; and I hope it implies, that one principle of my life has been, that reformation is to be wrought not by force or fraud, or any plan of man's devising, but by the truth of God's Word, the incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever.

"This Bible, having enrolled on its blank leaves the

names of those by whom it is given, will be handed down as an heir-loom in my family, to speak to them of virtue and piety, when their father's voice is silent, and to preserve among them a sacred memorial of the good and kind, with whom their father lived in love, among whom he wished to die. Dear friends, you have laid me under obligation, which, had it come from others, would have been too heavy to bear. But your spirits are too noble, your hearts too kind to ask me to be less a freeman, because I have become servant of all—to be less independent, because to gratify you, I have consented to seem poor.

"To live with such friends is to enjoy what makes life sweet, and to be parted from them at last would make death bitter, did not the gospel tell that there are friendships here which never die, and that hearts united in Christian love will be companions in bliss when this world has been burned, and this sun and these stars are no more.

"These last sad years have torn from me many a friend, and I can no longer form the joyous, confiding friendships of boyhood; but let those of us who are left rejoice that we are only pioneers of a work which will grow wide and large after we have been called away; and that when we go up to join the cloud of witnesses who rejoice with angels over penitents, and gaze with angels on God's manifold wisdom, we shall look down on benevolence enlarging, Christian enterprise spreading, the kingdom of Christ coming, till this

dark cold world shall shine with His glory, and every mouth shall be full of His praise."

About three years afterwards, Dr. Edgar received from the Alfred Street church another presentation, consisting of a Silver Salver and Purse of Sovereigns. He had, meanwhile, conducted one diet of their worship every Lord's Day, and they deemed it not unbefitting thus to recognise his services. When replying to the address accompanying these donations, he took occasion to refer to the unanimity which had always prevailed in the session and congregation. During his long pastorate there had never been a dispute. He also adverted with much gratification to their choice of a successor. "My chief anxiety in retiring from the pastoral charge of the congregation, was," said he, "to be succeeded by a man possessing my entire confidence. * * * Of the talent, qualifications, or ministrations of him, whom, with my hearty concurrence, you have chosen, I say nothing. Of all this you can judge for yourselves as well as I. But one thing I will say, though he is present, of what you had not so good an opportunity of judging as I. Since he became a member of Presbytery, there have been a number of very trying, very testing scenes—scenes exceedingly well qualified for trying of what stuff men are made; and after having, through all these, marked the votes and speeches, and whole conduct of your young minister, I am proud this night to declare that George Shaw is just the minister which Alfred

Street pulpit requires—a thoroughly courageous and thoroughly honest man. I have left you, therefore, in safe hands."

For some years Dr. Edgar gave much attention to the Connaught Industrial Schools. He related with honest pride, that the work produced in them had been honoured by the approval of Her Majesty, and that it had obtained a medal and certificate at the Great Exhibition. In a paper, entitled "Ireland's Mission Field," read by him at the Sixth Annual Conference of the British Organization of the Evangelical Alliance, in August, 1852, he stated that the Belfast Ladies' Association had sent to the care of good Christian ladies in Connaught, 56 female teachers, and that they had established in 70 districts, and among 2,000 pupils with their families and friends, such industrial training that the wages of the female operatives then amounted to £7,500 a-year. He also endeavoured to introduce linen weaving into the west of Ireland. An experiment was made near Creevalea, County Leitrim; but it was not successful, and the attempt was not repeated. For a length of time the Industrial Schools enjoyed much prosperity, and at one period, the manufactures which they originated, produced to the poor inhabitants an annual revenue of £25,000. From 1846 to 1858 inclusive, Dr. Edgar, with the assistance of his Ladies' Association, raised upwards of £16,000 for their support.

Dr. Edgar was indefatigable in keeping up the attention of the Christian public to his operations in

Connaught. "If a man," said he, "wishes to do, in his day, a work worthy of the talents which God has committed to his trust, let him be faithfully and steadily, and always at his post. Customers are not always entering the grocer's shop, but let the grocer be always there to receive them. Let the children of this world teach wisdom to the children of light. So I thought, and so I worked for Connaught, in Connaught's dark day. This hour I was meeting a disappointment, the next a pleasant surprise; this post brought nothing, the next nothing, but the third made up for both; two persons, perhaps, sent only good wishes, but one sent good cash; and thus being, according to the old proverb—at it, always at it, and at it with all energy—if I did not succeed to day, I did to-morrow; and if there was anything good to be had, I was there to receive it."* Every now and then he issued a tract giving some account of the work in Connaught, and pushed it into extensive circulation. Among these little publications may be mentioned "First Fruits from the West," which appeared in 1850—"Irish Industry: Woman's Work and Woman's Worth," which was written the year following—and "Connaught Harvest," which was produced in 1853.

The Belfast Ladies' Association repeatedly succeeded in obtaining considerable pecuniary assistance by means of a bazaar. The labour which their President expended in seeking contributions for the day of sale may appear almost incredible to those not

* "The Cry Heard."

acquainted with his manner of proceeding. On one occasion, when a great effort was considered necessary, he sent through the post-office no less than five thousand letters. Many of these were, no doubt, lithographs; but still the time and care employed in selecting the names of the individuals to whom they were to be sent, as well as in manipulating and addressing them, cannot be lightly estimated. Months before the day for holding the bazaar came round he was busy soliciting supplies of work; and, when the sale was over, he forwarded a note to every lady who had furnished even the most trivial article, thanking her for her donation. At the time of the bazaar he was all on the alert; and, when the business closed, he was prepared to dismiss the ladies who remained behind, with some entertaining and encouraging address.

In the getting up of his bazaars, and in promoting the interests of his Mission in Connaught, he had no more zealous coadjutor than Mr. David Ker Clarke—a gentleman well known to many as well in Scotland as in Ireland. Mr. Clarke had received a collegiate education, and was an accomplished scholar. When attending public worship in Fisherwick Place Presbyterian Church, Belfast, he might have been seen turning over the leaves of his Hebrew Bible as the minister illustrated his subject by quotations from the authorised version; and he was equally familiar with Greek and Latin, and some of the modern Continental languages. The Presbyterian Church of Kilmore was

built entirely by his exertions; and wherever he went, his simple faith and the transparent purity of his character secured him friends. In 1843, when the Scottish Establishment was rent asunder, he sympathised deeply with the founders of the Free Church; and when the ladies of Ulster presented a magnificent carpet, every square of which was wrought by one of themselves, to the late Marquis of Breadalbane, in testimony of the admiration with which they regarded his attachment to the cause of Non-intrusion, Mr. Clarke was selected by them to accompany the precious gift to its destination, and to have it laid at the feet of the great Presbyterian Peer. Possessed at one time of considerable private means, he gave with much liberality to schemes of benevolence; and, though he never entered the ministry, his life was devoted to the service of the Church. When Dr. Edgar announced a bazaar; Mr. Clarke was immediately up and doing; every lady within his reach who might be expected to contribute some needlework was sure of a visit from him; his own assiduity and self-denial roused others to exertion; and he never relaxed his efforts till the sale was completed. In 1858 this excellent man closed a life of great activity and usefulness at the age of fifty-nine.

The ladies of Connaught felt so sensibly the value of the services Dr. Edgar had rendered to their Province, that, in 1857, they resolved to request his acceptance of a piece of plate in testimony of their gratitude. Every year, in July, immediately after the annual

meeting of the General Assembly, he was in the habit of paying them a visit; and they intended to take advantage of this opportunity for making the presentation. The proposal met with a cordial response, and considerable progress had been made in the way of subscriptions when he became aware of what was in contemplation. He immediately interposed; and, with suitable expressions of gratitude for the honour intended, firmly declined the proffered gift. He felt that the donation would place him under obligations which might prove uncomfortable; and that he could act with greater freedom when he could say that his services had all along been perfectly gratuitous.

The claims of the sacred rest were early impressed on the mind of Dr. Edgar; and, soon after his settlement as a minister in Belfast, he began to call public attention to its proper observance. The drunkenness so common at this holy season first led him to think of the Temperance Reformation. In 1830 he protested in the public prints against various prevalent forms of Sabbath desecration—particularly the sailing of steam-boats on Sunday. At a subsequent period, when attempts were made to revive the errors of Peter Heylin, and to represent the weekly festival of the Christian church as a time partly for worship and partly for recreation, Dr. Edgar returned to the discussion of the question. He was convinced that the Sabbath is one of the great ordinances of revelation, and that any doubt cast on its authority has a tendency to weaken the very foundations of religion. He

viewed with indignation the efforts of many Episcopal writers—including some of the highest dignitaries of the Establishment—to explain away the obligations of the Fourth Commandment. Such conduct is surely calculated to generate a conviction that the whole liturgy is but a farce. The law of the Sabbath is there exhibited as still part of the Decalogue, and as often as it is repeated, the worshippers are expected to say, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law;" and yet, with many, the rehearsal of this prayer must be a piece of the grossest hypocrisy.

In a tract, with the heading, "The Poor Man's Sabbath," Dr. Edgar endeavours to purify public sentiment, and establish the abiding claims of the Fourth Commandment. This little work was adopted by the Sabbath and Temperance Committees of the Irish Presbyterian Church, and upwards of 50,000 copies were put into circulation. About two years afterwards he produced a tract on the same topic entitled "The Holy Rest." Another kindred publication is his "Sabbath made for Man"—one of a series of tracts issued by Mr. Drummond of Stirling."

In the year 1858 the Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick of Dublin proposed to some of his brethren that they should unite with him in preparing a series of tracts illustrative of the great features of Presbyterianism. As little was known of its history, polity, and peculiar claims in various parts of Ireland, particularly in the south and west, it was thought that a short and simple exposition of them, which could be purchased for a

trifle, would be seasonable and useful. Several ministers entered into the scheme; and each undertook to furnish a tract of a few pages on a prescribed topic. Dr. Kirkpatrick himself engaged to prepare an essay on "The Church of Christ;" Dr. Murphy was to treat of "The Presbytery;" Mr. Witherow * was to give a "Sketch of the History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland;" Dr. Barnett was to discuss "The Doctrines of the Church;" and Dr. Edgar was to expound "Presbyterian Privilege and Duty." The series proceeded without exciting much observation till it came to the turn of the Professor of Theology to make his appearance. But if a man had fallen from a balloon in presence of a crowd of spectators, he could scarcely have created a greater sensation than did the tract of Dr. Edgar, when it issued from the press. Old fashioned Presbyterians could see nothing very remarkable in its blunt and downright statements; judicious friends could have wished that it had been somewhat more gentle, didactic, and argumentative; and a few remarked that the liberty of finding fault with other denominations did not appear to them to be the highest privilege of the heirs of the Covenanters. But passages such as the following must have been read with no little impatience by high-flying Episcopalians:—

"The religion of man seeks pomp and show, with its consecrated churches and churchyards, its gorgeous cathedrals, with cupolas, spires, long-drawn aisles, and

* Now Professor Witherow of Magee College.

fretted vaults, naves, crosses, altars, chancels, screens, and piscines; the humble worship of New Testament Presbyterianism is in none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven, even in the despised schismatic conventicle, or under the shadow of a rock on the lone hill-side.

"The religion of man has high-sounding titles and names, archbishop, archdeacon, dean and chapter, prebendary, priest, and canon, godfathers and godmothers, sponsors, judges of the Court of Arches; with lent, and litany, and liturgy, and confirmation, consecration, commination, and churching, and all the sublime or ridiculous of the ecclesiastical roll; the religion of New Testament Presbyterianism, with its elder, and deacon, and unpretending house of prayer, is a religion of humility and self-denial, of alienation from the world and rebuke to its pride; appealing to the understanding and heart, and not to the eye; ruling by love, and not by force; extending Christ's spiritual kingdom, which comes not with observation; and cherishing and strengthening the faith which endures through Him who is invisible, and which looks to things unseen.

"The religion of man, in its haughty silence, may need for praise, the pealing anthem and thundering organ, while surpliced little mischiefs of the choir turn all praise to scorn;—but God has given, for humble Presbyterian praise, the best and noblest of all musical instruments, the human voice—the tongue, man's glory—and for words of praise the sweetest, noblest, best of all poetic words, the words sung by the gentle Jesus,

the sweet singer of Israel's song; and never is music so thrillingly sweet, and never praise so pleasant and lovely, as when an overflowing Presbyterian congregation, with one heart and one accord, sing, with the spirit and understanding, one of the songs of Zion."

The public press immediately called attention to the tract, and many Episcopalians freely expressed their indignation. Good men of the Church of England felt that much of it had, unfortunately, too solid a foundation; and some of his friends in the Establishment admitted to the author that his animadversions were deserved; but still they regarded the performance rather as a rhapsody than a demonstration. They disliked its tone, and they would have preferred proof to assertion. High churchmen were exasperated beyond measure. The style of authority in which it was expressed, offended their pride; its boldness and candour surprised them; and its stinging truth was intolerable.

In a short time eleven thousand copies of the tract were in circulation. The fierce criticism it at once encountered added to its notoriety. Some Belfast Episcopal clergymen in their zeal distributed it among their friends, and sent it through the post-office, that brethren in other quarters of the church might see how they were treated by the Presbyterian Professor. It speedily found its way into Connaught, and was put into the hands of Episcopal ladies who superintended the Industrial Schools. These "honourable women" were not very deeply read in theology, and had cer-

tainly never studied the controversies of the seventeenth century. How greatly were many of them astonished and confounded! They had hitherto thankfully received aid from the President of the Belfast Association; but they at once turned their backs on a man who ventured to laugh at aprons, and hoods, and shovel hats, and who dared to speak of a bishop as "a costly excrescence."

The strange condition of the church against which "Presbyterian Privilege and Duty" was mainly directed, appeared very clearly in the replies which the tract called forth. The Establishment was presented to the public as a house divided against itself. One writer assumed the ground of a high churchman, another of a low churchman, and another of a broad churchman. Had Dr. Edgar chosen to review his censors, he only required to set the one against the other, and allow them to perform the work of mutual annihilation. In a literary point of view, the hostile pamphlets certainly did little credit to the system they were designed to defend; for they were eminently stupid and illogical. The tract of one gentleman, who did not write anonymously, was an honourable exception. The Rev. Dr. Urwick, of Dublin, offended by the tone and spirit of "Presbyterian Privilege and Duty," ventured to expostulate; and, after reading his production, Dr. Edgar candidly declared that he felt bound to respect the excellent author.*

* The title of his tract is "TRUTH AND LOVE, a letter to the Presbyterians of Ireland, in reply to Rev. Dr. Edgar's tract, entitled 'Presbyterian Privilege and Duty,' by Rev. W. Urwick, D.D." Dr. Edgar's tract applies to Congregationalists as well as to Episcopalians.

It is well known that Dr. Edgar often acted under sudden impulse; and there is reason to believe that "Presbyterian Privilege and Duty" was produced under such circumstances. It is thought that some one in whom he was interested had shown an inclination to go over to Episcopacy; and that, provoked by what he considered a base desertion of the good old cause for the sake of fashion or promotion, he sat down and wrote the tract which exposed him to so much animadversion. He was devotedly attached to Presbyterianism; he knew the sacrifices to which its worthies in times past had submitted for its sake; he was persuaded that it is destined ultimately to prevail; and he regarded the relinquishment of its communion, for a system known to be inferior, as alike silly and unprincipled. In the days of Elizabeth, as well as in the days of Charles II., some of the best and wisest men in England spurned the fetters of an Act of Uniformity, and endured the loss of all things rather than yield to its unhallowed impositions. Time has justified their decision; for it is abundantly clear that, had it not been for the strong and continuous protests of Nonconformists, South Britain at this day would be almost, if not altogether, a Popish country. Dr. Edgar's spirit was stirred within him when he saw any of the children of the Covenanters or the Puritans surrendering privileges which their fathers had so dearly purchased, and consenting ingloriously to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

When any brother ventured to expostulate with him

for writing "Presbyterian Privilege and Duty," he invariably replied—"*Is it not true?* Can you point out any part of it in which I have made a mis-statement?" To the last he continued to maintain that he saw nothing in it to withdraw or change; and, on his death-bed, when giving instructions as to the preparation of an edition of his select works, strictly enjoined that it should be included in the publication. The tract may not be written with all the gravity and circumspection which might be expected from a Professor of Theology; but the complaints preferred against it exhibit a strange medley of absurdity and exaggeration. Half-hearted Presbyterians felt aggrieved by it, for it touched them to the quick by exposing their trimming and temporising; but high churchmen had no reason whatever to assail it with railing accusations, as they should have remembered that, according to their own principles, Presbyterian ordinances are invalid, and Presbyterian pastors no ministers at all. In all that he has written of Episcopacy, Dr. Edgar has never advanced anything so offensive and uncharitable.

CHAPTER XIII.

COMMERCIAL FAILURES OF 1858 AND THEIR EFFECTS—DEPUTATION TO AMERICA—REV. DR. MURRAY AND G. H. STUART, ESQ.—THE ULSTER REVIVAL OF 1859—REV. DAVID WILSON—REV. S. M. DILL—DR. EDGAR IN AMERICA—PEN AND INK SKETCHES—DR. EDGAR'S GRIEF FOR PROFESSOR WILSON—"PRESBYTERIAN PRIVILEGE AND DUTY" IN AMERICA—SUCCESS OF THE DEPUTATION—ENCOURAGING INCIDENTS—DR. EDGAR'S DECLINING HEALTH—TRACT ON THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS—ANOTHER PRESENTATION FROM ALFRED STREET CONGREGATION—PREACHES IN ACADEMY STREET CHURCH—CLIFTON STREET CHURCH—EKENHEAD CHURCH—BUILDING OF CHURCHES, MANSES, AND SCHOOLHOUSES IN CONNAUGHT—NEW CHURCH, MANSE, AND SCHOOL FUND.

N 1858 extensive commercial failures nearly put a stop to the sale of the products of the Connaught Industrial Schools; and many of these seminaries have since disappeared altogether. About the same time the increasing outlay of the Connaught Mission, in consequence of the establishment of new congregations and preaching-stations, began to awaken the anxiety of the directors; and various suggestions were made with a view to meet the growing expenditure. It was at length arranged that three or four ministers should be requested to proceed to the United States to solicit contributions; and Dr. Edgar,

the Rev. S. M. Dill, and the Rev. David Wilson, were selected as the deputation. Some time after the annual meeting of Assembly in 1859, these brethren set out for the New World; and, after a prosperous voyage, arrived at New York on the 19th of September.

Dr. Edgar had been urged to visit America in quest of support for the Roman Catholic Mission by two gentlemen of Irish birth—George H. Stuart, Esq., of Philadelphia, and the late Rev. Dr. Murray, of Elizabethtown, New Jersey. Mr. Stuart has recently acquired fresh honour as Chairman of the American Christian Commission, instituted to afford comforts, temporal and spiritual, to the sick and wounded soldiers and sailors of the Federal army and navy, during the late civil war. Born at Donacloney, in the county of Down, he emigrated in early life to the Western World, where he has become one of its merchant princes. In his adopted country he has shown his fellow-citizens how to employ wealth, as well as how to earn it; and the man who is regarded by not a few as worthy of the very highest place in the great Republic, feels it an honour to take part in a prayer meeting, or to teach in a Sabbath-school. He had often already assisted Dr. Edgar by contributions to his schemes of benevolence; and he now prompted others to generous giving by a donation of one thousand dollars. This, however, was only part of the aid he rendered to the Irish deputation. Wherever they went, he pioneered their way; introduced them to men of wealth and influence; and made arrangements for securing

the success of their appeal. Dr. Murray also laboured with great earnestness in their cause. He was by birth a Romanist; but, when a boy, he had removed to the United States, where he was led to adopt a purer faith, and to devote himself to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. He had already acquired celebrity as a writer; and, in a series of letters, under the signature "Kirwan," addressed to the Roman Catholic Bishop of New York, had discussed with great acuteness, learning, and eloquence, the points in controversy between Papists and Protestants. These letters had been republished by Dr. Edgar in Belfast, and recommended by him to the notice of British readers in an Introductory Essay. In 1851 Dr. Murray had visited his native land; had been present at the annual meeting of the Supreme Court of the Irish Presbyterian Church; and had been induced to proceed to Connaught to inspect the Assembly's missionary operations in that province. He had not forgotten what he had seen; and, on the present occasion, he exerted his utmost influence with his ministerial and other friends to obtain contributions for his Irish brethren.*

The appearance of the Deputation on the other side of the Atlantic attracted no little attention. The report of the great awakening in Ireland in 1859 had already crossed the ocean; and multitudes were eager to hear more and more of the wonderful movement.

* Dr. Murray died in February, 1861, in the 58th year of his age. His life has been written by his friend, Dr. Prime.

Each of the three brethren had some peculiar claim on public notice. Mr. Wilson—now Dr. Wilson, Moderator, for the second time, of the Irish Assembly—was the youngest of the party; but he lived in Limerick, so famous for its great siege, and he could tell of the difficulties which Protestantism has to encounter in the midst of a Roman Catholic population. Mr. Dill—now Dr. Dill, Professor of Systematic Divinity in Magee College, Londonderry—resided in Ballymena, the very centre of the Revival scenes, and he could relate what he had himself witnessed in the Year of Grace. And there were not a few scattered up and down throughout the Union to whom he was beloved for his father's sake. The Rev. Samuel Dill, of Donoughmore, near Strabane, was one of the worthiest ministers of the Synod of Ulster; and, in advanced life, he was wont to say that, of the children he had baptized, as many had emigrated to America as had remained in his own large congregation. Dr. Edgar, as the senior deputy, and as the apostle of the Irish Temperance Reformation, created especial interest. He addressed overflowing audiences at New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, and many other places; he was present at the meeting of the Synod of Ohio, and of the Synod of Pittsburg, as well as at the annual opening of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church; he preached three times on the Lord's Day, and frequently spoke during the week.

The accounts given in the American newspapers of Dr. Edgar's appearance, sermons, and speeches, evince

the curiosity he awakened. "Dr. Edgar," says one critic, "is no beauty—no one would mistake him for an Adonis—and no one would be more ready to grant this than himself. * * * In style he is terse, epigrammatic, and forcible, rather than copious or rotund. Noble thoughts flash out to be followed in rapid succession by others; although, when he sinks into a careless mood, he rides rough shod over stiff rules of rhetoric and principles of good taste. There is strength, rough and hairy, in his play; his sport is the gamboling of the elephant. In strokes of broad humour he excels; and so strong is his tendency in that direction, that he exposes himself even on solemn occasions to a charge of levity. In this respect he reminds one of Latimer, and in some degree of Luther." "His physique," says another, "is that of a man who has braved the storm, and grown stronger by fighting his way over difficulties. The power of physical endurance is marked in his every lineament. His audiences are spell-bound by an indescribable something in his style, although there is nothing that can be called prepossessing in his appearance. Nature, in forming him, seems to have applied the utilitarian rule with unbending rigor, tabooing the ornate in toto. His manner, while speaking, impresses one that he is not addressing his audience so much as he is talking either to himself, or some invisible personage suspended about midway between the pulpit and the ceiling. That he *does* bear his congregation in mind, however, was finely indicated in the closing portion of

his discourse, which was certainly as well calculated to pierce through the heart of his hearers into their pockets, as any similar appeal I have ever heard. He is evidently a man of fewer words than ideas, and apparently thinks his matter as he goes along. Now he seems to be in an abstract mood, at work, with his mental axe, chopping every superfluous word from the thought he is about to express; then a gleam of the pathetic seems to light up his big, honest heart, and he grows tender and impressive; anon an irresistible conclusion flashes upon his soul, and he brings his clenched hands down upon the book before him, throwing his protuberant brow in the same direction, with his eyes closed, and remains silent for a moment—as if to wait for the recording angel to inscribe it upon the heart of his hearers. One very noticeable feature of Dr. Edgar's preaching is, his facility for quoting Scripture, which he really does as if the passage quoted was a part of his own nature woven into the web of his discourse, and not, as is sometimes done, culled out, and *hung upon* a sermon like an antiquated ornament. The *quality* of his creed is, what members of that school would regard as soundly Calvinistic. The object and aim of his discourse was evidently to magnify the 'grace of God,' rather than frighten men with the 'terrors of the law.' His illustrations were forcible, and always to the point. In depicting the effects of trials upon the human heart, the rocking of the sea was used as a descriptive figure, the speaker at the same time folding his arms close to his

chest, and rocking his person to and fro, while he proceeded in plaintive tones to point the sinner to that 'Friend who sticketh closer than a brother." Take him all in all, he is a wonderful oddity, though thoroughly Irish all over, inside and out. Speaking of him as a man *merely*, not as a Christian, I should attribute the source of his peculiar power to large benevolence, a will that laughs at obstacles, a planning, methodical intellect, and an energy that is a stranger to fatigue, all of which are evidently possessed by Dr. Edgar in an eminent degree."

To strangers he sometimes appeared as if utterly destitute of feeling, but those who knew him well could testify to the strength of his affection. An incident occurred during his visit to America which vividly illustrated this feature of his character. On the 27th of October, when in the counting-house of Mr. Stuart of Philadelphia, a letter was put into his hands announcing the death of his friend and colleague, the Rev. Dr. Robert Wilson of Belfast, Professor of Sacred Literature for the Irish General Assembly. All present immediately perceived that the shadow of some deep sorrow had fallen upon him. His countenance changed; he became greatly agitated; and burst into tears. On the evening of the same day an immense meeting assembled in Jayne's Hall to hear the Irish Deputation; and, under other circumstances, he would have been filled with enthusiasm at the sight of the listening multitude; but the intelligence had totally unmanned him; and, after

vainly attempting for a few minutes to speak, in a manner befitting the occasion, he was obliged to sit down. Dr. Wilson was one of his most highly valued brother ministers; he had been associated for years with Dr. Coulter of Gilnahirk and himself in the editorship of the "Christian Freeman"—a monthly religious periodical published in Belfast; he had fought, side by side, with him the battles of Temperance and of ecclesiastical discipline; by his recent work on "Baptism: its Mode and Subjects," he had made a noble contribution to Christian literature; and Dr. Edgar felt that, in his death, the church had lost an accomplished scholar, a safe counsellor, an able professor, and an honest man. The sense of his personal bereavement far a time completely overpowered him.

When the Irish brethren were busily employed in collecting contributions throughout the Union, an attempt was made to create a prejudice against the senior member of the Deputation, by republishing a portion of his tract on "Presbyterian Privilege and Duty." This attack appears to have produced little impression. In a letter to the editors of the "Pittsburg United Presbyterian," he thankfully acknowledges the kindness and courtesy he had experienced from American Episcopalians. "The relations," says he, "in which you and your brethren of the Episcopal Church stand to each other, confer invaluable blessings on both, from which we in the Old World are sadly excluded. With you, old prelacy appears in a

greatly modified form. I wish him joy of the many and important improvements which American liberty and progress have made on him. With all my heart I wish that he could persuade his elder brother on the other side of the Atlantic to follow him in the march of reform. The Presbyterian element, which he has introduced, does him good like a medicine; and the improvements which he has made on his Service-book free many from the guilt of professing what they do not believe. * * * To not a few Episcopal clergy of the New World I owe an expression of gratitude for polite Christian attention, and I cheerfully give it. Their spirit and bearing are all that a Christian brother can desire. They are living up to the privileges which amid American light and liberty they enjoy; and while they thus enjoy privileges so superior to those of their brethren in the Old World, who groan under the despotism of long-established wrong, I trust they will ever gratefully remember that for what they possess above their elder brethren, they are chiefly indebted to the Presbyterian principles and Presbyterian constitution and independence of the land of Columbus. Strong as my faith has always been in the truth, and wisdom, and divine authority of Presbyterianism, my visit to America has made me a sturdier Presbyterian than ever. All that I have said or written regarding Episcopacy, Independency, and Presbyterianism, has been most fully illustrated and confirmed."

When in America Dr. Edgar met with some most

cheering proofs of the good fruits of the Connaught Mission. Ever since the year of famine there had been great emigration from the west of Ireland to the United States; and not a few of the young females educated in the Industrial Schools had left their native shores. Some of these made themselves known to Dr. Edgar on his visit, and thanked him as their best benefactor. "It was," says he, "beyond expression delightful to witness the greatness of their change. Their feelings in meeting me, and often my own, were beyond control." A few of them communicated with him by letter, and told him of the blessings of deliverance from ignorance, profanity, and Popery. Some of the emigrants were members of congregations under the care of Presbyterian ministers who were his friends, and who gave him a most gratifying account of their morality and piety. A number had engaged in the work of Sabbath School instruction, and had proved most efficient teachers. One of the Romish converts, with whom Dr. Edgar at this time renewed acquaintance, was now a pastor of the Old School Presbyterian Assembly.

The members of the Deputation remained about three months in the United States, and succeeded in obtaining upwards of £6000, in aid of the Assembly's Roman Catholic Mission. During their stay they were treated with marked respect by Evangelical Protestants of all denominations. As they moved about from place to place, the proprietors of several lines of railway communication presented them with free travel-

ling tickets. On the eve of their departure, a splendid entertainment was given to them by one of their many friends. Some fifty or sixty guests, comprising ministers, lawyers, scientific men, and other persons of note, were invited to meet them on the occasion. When about to sail, many Christian brethren waited on them to bid them farewell. In the dining saloon of the ship the company assembled. Dr. Murray was called to the chair; addresses were delivered by Drs. Prime, Cox, and Rockwell, and Mr. George H. Stuart; prayer was offered up by Dr. Cox; Dr. Murray gave the parting blessing; and the Irish strangers went on their way. After a somewhat tempestuous voyage, they reached Cork a few days before the end of the year.

Some of Dr. Edgar's friends now observed with concern indications of his declining vigour. He began to complain of the failure of his sight, and presented the appearance of one worn out with over exertion. The bodily and mental fatigue he had endured when in America had apparently told on his constitution. He had consented, not without some misgivings, to become a member of the Deputation; but his anxiety to obtain aid for his favourite mission overcame his hesitation. The travelling, the visiting, the excitement, the preaching, and the speech-making to multitudinous assemblages, had too severely taxed the strength of a man in not very robust health, who had now nearly completed his sixty-second year.

About this period Dr. Edgar produced a little work

differing somewhat in character from his ordinary publications. It is entitled, "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress—the Sterling and the Spurious." Its object is to expose a piece of literary imposture; and he has shown clearly that what has often been sold as the third part of the celebrated work of the great dreamer is a miserable cheat. The fraud had been challenged long before; but as publishers, either through dishonesty or want of critical discernment, continued to append this spurious addition to the "Pilgrim's Progress," it was necessary once more to call attention to the fabrication.

On his return from America, Dr. Edgar was presented with an address of congratulation and a purse of sovereigns by the congregation of Alfred Street. He had hitherto preached to them once every Lord's Day; but, soon afterwards, he ceased to officiate in his old pulpit. Having, with the assistance of the Christian public, purchased from the Baptists a place of worship in Academy Street, he commenced there to minister to a number of poor people whom he gathered from the streets, lanes, and garrets of the neighbourhood. When thus employed, he was obliged to spend much of his time in an unwholesome atmosphere, to climb up dark and narrow stairways, and to do many things ill fitted to promote the comfort of one fast passing into the vale of years. He succeeded, notwithstanding, in organizing a congregation; and, in February, 1862, the Rev. John Mecredy, formerly of Saintfield, was inducted into the pastoral charge.

In a short time the attendance so multiplied that the place became too narrow for the auditory; and the Presbyterian Church of Clifton Street was erected to supply the additional accommodation required. Dr. Edgar set to work again in the empty meeting-house of Academy Street; and, in a short period, the nucleus of another worshipping society was formed. In due time the people were recognised by the Presbytery as a congregation; and, in February, 1866, the Rev. John Greenlees, formerly of Ramelton, was installed as their pastor. A benevolent lady soon afterwards communicated to Dr. Edgar her intention of devoting £2000 to provide the increasing flock with a suitable sanctuary; and, on the day on which his successor was elected to the Chair of Systematic Divinity in Belfast Presbyterian College—the 3rd of October, 1866—Mrs. Dummett, in presence of an assembled company of ministers and laymen, laid the foundation-stone of the *Ekenhead Presbyterian Church*—the edifice being so designated in memory of the brother of the generous donor, the late Thomas Ekenhead, Esq.

When these new congregations were in process of formation, Dr. Edgar was often found in other parts of Ireland. As early as 1861, attention had been called to the spiritual destitution of the Donegal Highlands; and, in the summer of 1864, in company with the Rev. John L. Rentoul, of Ballymoney, he visited the place, and recommended it as a suitable field for missionary operations. About the same time he induced the

Rev. David Brown, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Letterkenny, to devote himself to its cultivation ; and, on the 17th of March following, Mr. Brown was ordained at Ramelton as a missionary to labour throughout the large territory, with Gweedore for its centre, extending from Crossroads, a village six miles from Dunfanaghy, to Croway Head. Dr. Edgar, who had gone over to the county of Donegal to commend one of the schemes of the Assembly to the liberal support of the Presbyterians in that part of the province, contrived to be present on the interesting occasion. He joined with his brethren of the Presbytery of Letterkenny in the service, offered up the ordination prayer, and delivered a most impressive address to the young minister.

Meanwhile, much of his attention was devoted to the erection of schoolhouses, manses, and churches, in the west of Ireland. In twenty years the Presbyterian congregations in Connaught had increased from six to twenty-one. Thirty-three preaching-stations had also been established ; and of most of these he had the superintendence. In the Report of the Home Mission to the Roman Catholics of Ireland for 1864, he was able to state that in Connaught fourteen churches and fourteen manses had been built within a few years. In some cases he found it impossible to induce landlords to make small grants of ground for Presbyterian purposes. The erection of a schoolhouse or church on his estate was a boon to the proprietor ; for whilst it immediately involved a considerable outlay of money

among his tenantry, it ultimately promoted their moral and spiritual improvement. But there were individuals among the Connaught gentry who could not see these advantages, and who assigned strange reasons for declining to lease in perpetuity an acre, or half an acre, of land at its full value to the Irish Assembly. One gentleman gave as his apology that he did not wish to introduce new doctrines into the parish, and thus create dissension among the inhabitants. Another declared that he had no faith in the perpetuity of the Presbyterian religion, and that he did not know but that the members of the congregation might eventually turn Mormons. Others, not so timid or short-sighted, evinced much anxiety to encourage a system which had contributed so much to diffuse wealth and intelligence over Ulster. In his last tour through the midland counties and Connaught, in the early part of the summer of 1865, Dr. Edgar opened several new churches, and preached in others which had been recently erected. At Castlebar, the capital of county Mayo, an acre of ground in a suitable situation had been provided at a nominal rent, on which he found a handsome Presbyterian Church, a commodious manse, and an excellent schoolhouse. At Roscommon a tasteful structure for Presbyterian worship had been built in the centre of the town; and, though he officiated in it on a week day, the congregation filled the edifice. He was gratified to see that the new churches at Castlerea, Clogher, Boyle, and Creggs were all in a prosperous state; and in the new church

of Athlone he preached thrice on one Sabbath to a numerous audience.

Such was the confidence reposed in his wisdom and integrity that benevolent and wealthy individuals entrusted to him large sums to be dispensed, according to his discretion, for the spread of Presbyterianism in Ireland. In the course of a few years before his death, he was in this way enabled to distribute upwards of £2500. To Killala congregation he gave £250; to Ballymote, £85; to Clogher, Ballaghaderin, £408;* to Boyle, £280; to Roscommon, £442; to Castlebar, £403; to Tullamore, £200; to Fethard, £100; to Academy Street, Belfast, £100; to Enniscorthy, £200; and to Dromore West, Creevalea, Ballinasloe, and Athlone, £156. By such donations he rendered most seasonable aid to all these congregations.

In a few years the first Church and Manse Fund of the General Assembly was completely exhausted. The scheme had evoked liberality such as had never before been exhibited by Irish Presbyterians. The £30,000 which the committee had administered in small grants, represented by far the minor portion of the sum actually raised; as each grant for a manse or church was made after proof given that a much larger amount had been contributed by the congregation, and that a site in perpetuity had also been secured. It would be no exaggeration to say that the scheme added considerably more than £100,000 to the value

* A large portion of this sum was paid away in salaries to teachers, colporteur, &c.

of the ecclesiastical property of the Irish Presbyterian Church. But many schoolhouses, manses, and churches were still required, and another fund was necessary to aid in their erection. It was accordingly resolved to make collections for a supplemental scheme, and Dr. Edgar was appointed Convener of a Provisional Committee. In this service he was employed till his death. At that period he had obtained, almost entirely by his personal exertions, subscriptions amounting to about £19,000.

CHAPTER XIV.

DECLINING HEALTH—DRS. SMYLY AND EUSTACE—ANXIETY RELATIVE TO A SUCCESSOR—LETTERS TO HIS FRIENDS—HAPPY FRAME OF MIND—CLOSING SCENES—DEATH—FUNERAL—ADDRESS OF MODERATOR OF ASSEMBLY—EDGAR SCHOLARSHIP—LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE—FUNERAL SERMONS.

THE time had now arrived when this good man was to rest from his labours. About the beginning of November, 1863, he was attacked by fever, and his situation awakened much anxiety; but, towards the end of the following January, he was able once more to take charge of his class. His pulse, however, still continued unnaturally accel erated, and he never after completely recovered his wonted health. In the beginning of the summer of 1865 he became hoarse, as if attacked by a bad cold; but it was soon discovered that the complaint was of a far more formidable character, and that the affection of the voice proceeded from a polypus or fungus formed in the throat. His long tried and skilful medical attendant, Dr. Thomas Reade, alarmed by the symptoms, recommended him to visit the Irish metropolis in quest of additional advice. Repairing to Dublin, he enjoyed the constant care of Dr. Eustace —a gentleman who treated him with the affection of a son, and who watched the development of his case

with the deepest solicitude. Dr. Smyly, who has earned great celebrity by his successful treatment of diseases of the throat, was immediately consulted; he contrived to remove the fungus; and hopes began to be entertained of the patient's recovery. About the middle of November Dr. Edgar returned to Belfast; took charge of his class; and conducted it throughout the Session. He must all the while have been suffering much, for the throat continued in a state of disease; but he never complained; declined the assistance of his colleagues; kept up his extensive correspondence; and attended to his ordinary engagements almost with as much activity as ever. At the close of the Session he returned to Dublin in the hope that Dr. Smyly might still be able to arrest the progress of the malady.* He now took up his abode in the house of his valued friend, Hugh Moore, Esq. of Rathgar. With the exception of a short visit to Belfast about the

* The following note, which sufficiently explains itself, is published without the knowledge of its author; but it has been thought right by the family of the deceased thus to acknowledge his kindness:—

"My dear Dr. Edgar,—I received your note and enclosure, and waited for a few days to see you, as I am a bad hand at writing. I had the hope, and I do not yet entirely despair, of restoring to your Church one of its brightest lights; and though not a member of it, I can admire its good men; and I would like to do for you what I would do for any clergyman who devotes his time and talents to God's service for a merely nominal stipend—that is to say, to do my best for you for nothing. I intended to do so from the first, but did not wish to mention it, lest your feelings would prevent your coming to me as often as I thought necessary, if you thought you were occupying my time without remunerating me.—Believe me, yours very sincerely,

"Philip C. Smyly."

It is only due to Dr. Eustace to say that he was equally kind and disinterested.

time of the Assembly, he remained there till his death. It gradually became too evident that recovery was not to be expected. The formation of a new polypus in the throat was ascertained; bronchitis supervened; and other sad symptoms interdicted hope. As he could not now return to Belfast, and as he was unwilling any longer to trouble his kind host, he was desirous to be transferred to other apartments; but Mr. Moore and his family interposed, and insisted that he must live and die with them. Happy is the man who, in the time of his extremity, has such friends!

When Dr. Edgar understood that recovery was hopeless, he immediately set about the arrangement of all his temporal affairs, and then patiently awaited the great change. Anxious that the Class of Theology should not suffer in consequence of his inability to take charge of it, he addressed a letter to the Moderator of Assembly expressing a wish for the appointment of a successor; but the members of the College Committee were unwilling to resort to such an alternative whilst he lived; and, had his days been prolonged, his colleagues of the Faculty were prepared to supply his lack of service. Letters from the Moderator and the Convener of the College Committee assuring him of the esteem, sympathy, and prayers of his brethren, called forth from him a most grateful response. He was very easily impressed by kindness; and the language in which he acknowledged these little marks of regard showed how they were appreciated.

During the last few weeks of life he wrote farewell

letters, or sent tokens of affection to his old and intimate friends. Some days before his death he dictated a note to John Arnold, Esq. of Belfast, who had long been an elder of his congregation, assuring him of his unabated attachment, and bidding him an affectionate adieu. A few years before, he had taken a very active part in promoting the erection of Elmwood Presbyterian Church, Belfast—a house of worship which, when completed with a belfry and spire, will rank amongst the most beautiful ecclesiastical structures in the province of Ulster. To Robert Corry, Esq., who had contributed £2000 towards the building, he addressed a communication, congratulating him on the prosperity of the congregation, and sending his dying regards to other members of it who had co-operated with him in its formation. To a widow lady whom he had greatly befriended, and who had solicited his advice as to some important temporal concerns, he replied thus :—"My ever dear and faithful, —I was resolving to write to you when your last came; but resolves are not easily put by me even into the most liquid ink now." Then, after giving her the counsel she had requested, he ended with the following touching language :—And now I draw to a close—and other scenes are pressing round closer every day. Before the one word *Eternal* what is all here? Before the Sun of Righteousness all is pale. Live to Him, and for Him. For Him train your children. Gentle, and loved, and amiable one, keep me in memory. Farewell!—JOHN EDGAR."

During the latter part of his illness he enjoyed the presence of nearly all the members of his family. Though suffering severely, he was never heard to murmur. His happy frame of mind excited the wonder of all who surrounded him. Often did he speak of God's great goodness and mercy. After recovering from a frightful spasmodic attack, he would say to himself "This light affliction—this very light affliction." His gratitude to his medical attendants was such that his feelings quite overcame him when speaking of their thoughtful and affectionate care. As to the kindness of the family of Mr. Moore, he could hardly trust himself to mention it at all. "Certainly," says one of his daughters, "every member of that family watched over him, night and day, with unceasing vigilance, as though he had been the most loved individual of their own circle. They devoted themselves wholly to us. I believe, even at home, my father could not have had half the comfort he there enjoyed."

Much of his time was occupied in prayer and other religious exercises. The reading of the Scriptures was as balm to his soul; and, when some passage which particularly attracted his attention was rehearsed, he would interpose, repeat it again, and dwell on its truth and excellence. A few days before his death he spoke to a member of his family of the hitherto unknown beauties he had discovered in the Epistles to the Colossians and Philippians. In the stillness of the night he was often heard repeating the precious promises, and especially portions of the Book of Psalms.

To his wife he addressed many sweet words of consolation ; and to all his family he gave suitable advice. He was greatly pleased with the deportment of his eldest son, who was frequently employed in reading the Scriptures to him, and who was much with him during his illness. To the last he took an interest in the well-being of all his friends. He prayed earnestly for his children that it might not be said of any of them, "I have called and ye refused—ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh."

Though he had led a life of such unwearied exertion, and though he was constantly employed in works of benevolence, he regretted that he had done so little. When he contrasted the amount of his obligations with what, through grace, he had been enabled to accomplish, he felt that he had been an unprofitable servant. "Had I done," said he to one of his ministerial brethren, "ten thousand times more than I ever attempted, what would there be for me but to cast myself a sinner on the mercy that is in Christ?" And yet his confidence in the Great High Priest never faltered. Often did he speak of the comfort of believing, and of hope in Christ as the only thing worth having in a dying hour. When his youngest daughter read the words "This God is our God for ever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death" (Ps. xlviii., 14), he added "I am *perfectly sure* he will never disappoint me. The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." On another

occasion, when a member of the family was reading in Philippians (i., 20, 23), "according to my earnest expectation and my hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness as always so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life *or by death.* . . . For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ *which is far better*"—he repeated after her, with great emphasis, "or by death which is far better." At another time he exclaimed, "How wonderful is God's goodness on earth, and how infinite will be his goodness in heaven! I am departing to be with Christ which is far better. That's what dying is—to be with Christ. What a change! What a great change! What a change in a moment!"

On the Friday preceding his decease he had the satisfaction of receiving a short visit from the Moderator of the General Assembly. Dr. Wilson had been, as the reader may recollect, one of his fellow deputies to America, in 1859, and ever since he had cherished for him a warm regard. He was now very weak, and spoke with difficulty; but he was found rejoicing in hope. The interview was exceedingly comfortable to both parties. Dr. Wilson had the privilege of joining in prayer with him, and of hearing him bear his dying testimony to the truth of the great doctrines of which he had been so long an able expositor.

On Saturday, the 25th of August—the last day he completed on earth—he was somewhat better. On that day he wrote the subjoined letter to a lady—a

member of the Society of Friends—who had for many years supported him in his benevolent undertakings:—

"Cremorne, Rathgar, Dublin,
25th August, 1866.

"My ever loving and beloved Mrs. Murphy,—Near the closing scene of a peaceful death-bed, and in bidding you a fond and grateful farewell, I wish to express to you and your dear sister the very high estimate I entertain of your worth, as well as of the support, sympathy, and consolation, which I have derived from you during a good part of a life-time spent in trying to benefit our neighbours, in Temperance, Industry, Cleanliness, and General Social Position. I congratulate you on the success with which God has been pleased to crown our efforts, and I ask you to look forward with me in triumph for better and brighter days in time to come. United on subjects and in interests of paramount importance, we could afford to exercise charity in smaller; and, so far as my love to you is concerned, it was a matter of comparatively little moment to me whether you were Quaker or Presbyterian.

"With all my heart I bid you a most sincere and Christian farewell.

"John Edgar."

Before this letter reached its destination the worthy matron to whom it was directed was no more. On the day on which it was written, she put on immortality. A note addressed to Dr. Edgar, announcing the event, arrived in Dublin the day after his own death.

When his son was about to leave him on the night immediately preceding his decease, he read the 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Dr. Edgar's attention was arrested by the concluding words—"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil—whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." He then spoke much of the benevolence of Christ, and declared that he sometimes seemed to *feel* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of His love. "Surely," said he, "this cannot be the effect of the opium. I have taken none whatever for the last four-and-twenty hours, and yet I still feel the same perfect assurance." He added, "I am now nearly seventy years of age, the allotted time for man on earth, and I shall soon join those who have gone before me, and who are among the general assembly and church of the first-born." Then, turning to a dear friend who was sitting by his bed-side, he said—"I hope to welcome you there. I will be waiting for you there." During the night he was overheard repeating passages of Scripture, and with much emphasis the words, "The Rock that is higher than I—higher than I."

In the morning he was evidently fast sinking into that sleep which knows no waking till the morning of the resurrection. When his daughter spoke to him, he opened his eyes, and then closed them for the last time. He expired without a struggle, on the forenoon

of the Lord's Day—the 26th of August, 1866—in the sixty-ninth year of his age, having nearly completed the fortieth year of his professorship.

It was observed that, soon after death, the appearance of the face was much changed. The skin, ordinarily very sallow, became comparatively fair; the ruggedness of the living features had passed away; and the countenance exhibited the satisfaction of sweet repose.

"How blest the Christian when he dies,
When sinks the weary soul to rest;
How mildly beam th' expiring eyes—
How gently heaves th' expiring breast;
So fades the summer cloud away—
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er—
So gently shuts the eye of day—
So dies the wave along the shore."

During the earlier stages of his long illness, Dr. Edgar often meditated on the great change approaching; and, in his correspondence with a very dear friend, occasionally gave free utterance to his feelings. One of his cogitations on funerals, as thus communicated, may here be inserted :—

April, 1866.

——"Being naturally very unceremonious, I attach likely too little importance to long array and sacrifice of time, money, and comfort, for the mere purpose of putting in an appearance at the funeral procession of

one little, perhaps, minded in life. These gatherings are generally to please the living, not to honour the dead. If we leave few behind us to count heads then, there will be few heads to be counted. Still, however, it is gratifying to survivors to know that there are those willing to honour the memory of the friends we so fondly prized ; and though it is quite true that sorrow is solitary, and of all commonplaces in this commonplace world the most commonplace is commonplace consolation ; yet, while we would not admit these Job's comforters to our secret chamber, we would feel sorely disappointed and grieved if not one of them should be hanging by our doorposts in the day of our sorrow.

"Two remembrances cling to my memory—one, of the corpse of a young woman which was found in one of the arches at the paper mill, which nobody claimed; and though Hood's lines were not written then, yet the idea possessed me long—Is it possible that any one can be so thoroughly thrown, as Goldsmith says, into the lumber room of nature, as to pass away and not be missed by a single human being?

'Rattle his bones over the stones, a workhouse pauper that nobody owns.'

"When engaged as a poor solitary lad in gathering my first congregation from the poorest of the poor, an indelible impression was left on my mind by the longing anxiety with which the poor friendless, bereaved ones waited and waited but waited in vain to hear some—

'Mourner's muffled tread that came to sorrow o'er the dead;'

and then when hope had given up the ghost, the haste of disgrace and vexation with which we hurried the coffin round the corner to hide our desolation from every eye."

Dr. Edgar's own funeral was something very different from the dreary scenes he has here described. On the morning of the 29th of August, a number of attached friends accompanied his remains from Dublin; and, at the Belfast Terminus of the Ulster Railway, about mid-day, a great multitude had assembled awaiting their arrival. When they made their appearance, a funeral procession was formed. After the hearse and the relatives of the deceased, the Faculty of the Assembly's College, Belfast, and ministers of the Assembly—amounting to upwards of one hundred—walked two and two; then followed ministers of all Protestant denominations, Professors of Queen's College, Magistrates, Bankers, Merchants, and members of various corporate bodies connected with Belfast; a vast concourse of the inhabitants attended; and not a few of the poor who were present, testified, by tokens which could not be mistaken, how much they mourned the loss of their benefactor. About eighty carriages and other conveyances formed part of the funeral cortege.

When the procession arrived at the grave in Malone Cemetery, devotional services were conducted by the Rev. J. H. Moore, of Elmwood Presbyterian Church —with whose congregation Dr. Edgar had been connected. The Rev. Dr. Wilson, of Limerick, Moderator of the Assembly, then delivered the following address:—

"Need I say, dear friends, that I feel a serious responsibility in undertaking, in the present trying circumstances, to address you; and nothing but a sense of duty, owing to my official position, could have induced me to yield at the last moment to the request of my friends. I feel that I am really inadequate to say much with regard to the personal history or character of our father and friend, whose remains we have this day followed to the tomb. A great man—a Prince in Israel has fallen, a leader in the Lord's covenanted host has gone, a standard-bearer and a witness for the truth has been removed from amongst us. It is not necessary that I should say much with respect to the character or qualities of him who is gone. This has already been done, and will, no doubt, be done again; and I am sure that all of us had a melancholy satisfaction in reading yesterday* the record of his life, written by a faithful and a friendly hand—by one who has faithfully recorded the public character and acts of our father. This is not the time, nor is this the place to refer to the many acts of patriotism and philanthropy and piety in which he engaged, or to attempt to dwell upon the vast domains of ignorance and sin which he invaded, or to tell of the sins of the rich and poor, of the high and humble alike, which he exposed and checked. I know well that vast reforms through him, by God's grace, were effected in the hearts and minds and lives of many a man and woman in our community.

* Referring to an obituary notice in the *Banner of Ulster*, from the pen of Professor Gibson.

What scheme of benevolence or humanity was started in this town or neighbourhood for the benefit of his country or the world, in which Dr. Edgar did not give a ready hand, and do his best to bear the burden? But Ireland's woes specially touched the pure and good man's heart. His generous sympathies were elicited, and the energies of his upright and chivalrous mind were braced to action on behalf of his native land. Connaught's poor found in him a feeling friend; Connaught's ignorance was invaded by him, and knowledge, through his instrumentality, has been scattered through that vast province; Connaught's churches and schools, and pastors, and congregations, testify stronger than language to that good man's worth, and to the earnestness of his labours. His efforts were endless in the extension of Christ's cause at home and abroad —among the Jews and Gentiles—to maintain the cause of our Lord and Master among the Churches of the land, and especially in that section of the Christian Church with which he was himself identified, the Church of our fathers—to raise among us an earnest and pious ministry, and to promote among all classes of the population habits of industry and of temperance. He was a great as well as a good man, and, like many such men, a public man and a motive power in the world—a motive power in the country and in the Church. Men have been at times misrepresented because misunderstood. No man can read, and no man can understand the history of a man like him who is gone, unless one who has sat at his feet, and looked

at that man in the light of the glory of a common Master. We have met here this day to commit his ashes to the tomb—dust to dust, and ashes to ashes—believing, as we all do, in a certain hope of a glorious resurrection from the dead. It was my privilege not long since, in accordance with the duty imposed upon me by many I see around me, to convey to him a resolution of the Church respecting him; and I was privileged to testify to him when living among us that his many efforts and different and laborious labours for the extension of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ were thoroughly appreciated by you, that his character and honour were endeared to you all, and that to you he was bound by the closest and tenderest ties. It was our privilege to call upon God's Holy Spirit to bless and sustain him, and to strengthen him and sanctify his soul in his affliction; and I feel constrained to tell you in a sentence how our prayers to God were answered, and how our lamented father was upheld in his departing hours. I shall ever esteem it a privilege that I came on Friday morning last from the South of Ireland, and called on our departed friend when lying on the bed of death, and had the privilege of hearing him speak, and it will be to you all encouraging to know that he was then, as through his long and laborious life, a witness to the truth—faithful and uncompromising in testifying to the truth—to the gospel of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, laying all his efforts for his Master at the foot of the Cross, and giving God the

glory. He said to me then, 'How low we live, how low we live! Sinners as we have been, it becomes us more and more to look up to the infinite and adorable Saviour. We look to our own imperfections when we ought to be sitting with Christ in heavenly places.' He looked up and spoke of the love of Christ as being transcendant and infinite, covering all. I am here to testify to the grandeur and power of these great doctrines on the mind of this dying Christian. They were the food of his soul. I saw what touched his heart and came home to it. Christ was in him the hope of glory—the faith which he preached and taught that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. His own imperfections were plainly before him, but, as allusion has been made in the prayer, he saw himself a perfect man in Christ Jesus his Lord. No man is able to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed; but he saw himself perfect in the sight of his Lord and Saviour, as he said himself, 'I am going home, home, home.' A few days afterwards I learned the tidings of his departure—on the morning of the Sabbath, just two days after I saw him—that he had exchanged an earthly for a heavenly Sabbath, and went up to be for ever with the Lord. Dear friends, think of that blessed revelation of God, the Word of Jesus, 'Whosoever believeth in me shall never die.' Never die! never die! Our friend is not dead, but sleepeth. He went asleep on that Sabbath morning at eight o'clock. At eleven o'clock they looked at him, and thought he was

still sleeping; but his soul had gone to its Heavenly rest, where the soul of the believer lives on and lives for ever. The body of the believer sleeps—sleeps united to Christ till the resurrection, when it shall come forth a new body. The body of the wicked, foul, festering, and torn, which had no connection with Christ, shall also arise, but the body of the believer is united to Christ, and shall rise at the resurrection to a glorious immortality. And then it shall come forth—how fair, and beautiful, and glorious! It shall come forth, not again encumbered by the bonds of sin, but that which was glorious at the first shall have another glory by reason of the glory which excelleth. What a blessed revelation, then, is ours. Let me beseech you to think of it that death is not annihilation, but a change to a purer light—that the grave is not a dark and gloomy prison, but the resting-place where the emancipated lay aside for a while the worn-out vestments of mortality. Our brother shall rise again. He is not dead, but sleepeth. That which was sown in dishonour shall be raised in glory; that which was sown in weakness shall be raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body; and then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written that death is swallowed up in victory. A word or two more, and I have done. Life is given us by God to be devoted to His glory. Life has been given to us to be devoted to His service. Our departed father has set us an example worthy of imitation. He lived for God and for the advancement of His glory.

Life is precious, brethren; live for God. Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Let us all, office-bearers, and ministers, and people, comforted by God, give ourselves heart, and soul, and body to His cause. Let us stir up our abilities and energies, and use our exertions while it is called to-day; for the night cometh when we shall pass into the presence of the Judge of all the earth. Let us leave the world, then, as our departed brother did, and receive the faithful acclamation from the most righteous Judge—'Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;' and to His name be glory for ever and ever."

The Rev. Dr. Murphy, Professor of Hebrew in the Assembly's College, closed the service with prayer and the apostolic benediction.

Immediately after the funeral, it was suggested by Sir Edward Coey that a scholarship, in memory of the deceased professor, should be founded in the seminary with which he had been so long connected, and that subscriptions, of not more than one guinea from each contributor, should be solicited. This proposal met with a hearty response; and, in a very short time, the greater part of the sum required was forthcoming. The "Edgar Scholarship" will be the most valuable yet established in Belfast Presbyterian College.

Letters of condolence were received by the bereaved family from various quarters, evincing the respect in which Dr. Edgar was held, and bearing testimony to

his public and private services. Notwithstanding his consistent and earnest profession of Presbyterianism, he had many warm friends in the Episcopal Church. The following communication from a worthy rector shows how much he was valued by good men in the Establishment:—

"Glebe House, ———,
"*Aug.* 31*st*, 1866.

"My dear Mrs. Edgar,—From my very heart do I condole and sympathise with you and your family in the heavy, heavy affliction with which it has pleased our Heavenly Father to visit you. Your beloved husband had been my affectionate and kind friend for more than forty years, and I always regarded him with the most sincere love, respect, and confidence; and his manner towards me, whenever we met, was as that of a *brother* in every sense of the word.

"Do not, my dear friend, give way to overmuch sorrow. He whom your dear husband had ever trusted and loved and served is One whose *nature* never, never changes, no matter how His *dispensations* may do so. He is *love*—pure, boundless, unchangeable love—to a full, endless, perfect knowledge of which your truthful, honest-hearted, generous, talented husband has now passed. Oh, may we who know his worth try to follow his example.—Ever believe me, my dear Mrs. Edgar, to be your very affectionate old friend,

"———— ————."

On the day on which the General Assembly met to

choose a successor for the Chair of Systematic Theology, the following minute was unanimously adopted:—

"The General Assembly has heard with profound sorrow of the death of Dr. Edgar, who, for so many years, had filled the offices of Professor of Systematic Theology, Convener of the General Assembly's Mission to the Roman Catholics, and latterly Convener of the Assembly's Church, Manse, and School Scheme. The Assembly cannot forget what Ireland owed to Dr. Edgar in the days when fever, famine, and pestilence wasted the population, and the noble efforts he originated and so successfully conducted for the amelioration of the masses of Connaught. Nor can it overlook his far-sighted zeal and benevolence in planning various industrial movements by which he cultivated a spirit of independence in Connaught, and in elevating the moral status of thousands of a neglected population. The General Assembly, bowing with submission to the sovereign will of the Great Disposer of events, in calling home one who was eminently instrumental in advancing the Divine cause in the land, would this day record its sense of the services rendered by Dr. Edgar to various measures of philanthropy and Christian enterprise. The Assembly would embalm his memory as the father of the Temperance reformation in Ireland, the founder of the Ulster Penitentiary, the friend of the Institution for the Deaf, and Dumb, and the Blind, and above all as the very heart and strength of the Connaught Mission; and under God would ascribe the success which has attended that

mission, as evinced in the churches, schools, and mission stations that he has planted, and in the converts that have been led to embrace the truth as it is in Jesus, to the unwearied zeal, the loving faith, the activity and persevering energy of this much-loved brother. The Assembly, while acknowledging the debt of obligation under which Dr. Edgar laid this Church, and feeling that his departure is a public loss to the country as well as to itself, would ascribe to God all the praise for the gifts and graces with which Dr. Edgar was so richly endowed; and yet, would affectionately dwell on his sound judgment, quick apprehension, stern integrity of character, and earnest zeal, hallowed by a life of piety, and associated with a spirit of noble benevolence and intelligence, yet very decided attachment to the principles and constitution of the Presbyterian Church. The General Assembly laments that it shall see his face no more; but remembers that there are hearts which must feel more keenly than it could the loss of Dr. Edgar, as a husband and father; and directs the Moderator to forward a copy of this Minute, with a suitable letter of condolence, to the bereaved widow and family, expressing the tender sympathy of this Church with them in their sorrow, and rejoicing in the hope that, highest of all consolations, he has finished his course and kept the faith, and died in the full and assured confidence of being for ever with the Lord. Finally, the General Assembly would take occasion, from the removal of so many fathers and brethren, to exhort all

ministers to work while it is day, to give full proof of their ministry, so that when they are called by their Master's voice to give in their account, the Assembly may be able to say over their ashes, as it does this day over those of the lamented Dr. Edgar,—'Remember them who have spoken unto you the Word of God; whose faith follow considering the end of their conversation—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'"

The number of funeral sermons preached on the occasion of the death of Dr. Edgar has perhaps no parallel in the history of the Irish Presbyterian Church. The event was noticed in their pulpit services by ministers in Belfast, Dublin, Derry, and many other places. Some of these discourses have been published at length, and copious extracts from others have appeared in the newspapers. In not a few monthly magazines and other periodicals, special mention was also made of Dr. Edgar's remarkable career. He was so well known to the public; he had moved among so large a circle of personal friends; and his services were so generally acknowledged, that he could not be permitted to pass away in silence from the stirring scenes where he had so long occupied so prominent a position.

CHAPTER XV.

DR. EDGAR'S INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER—HIS ATTAINMENTS AND LITERARY TASTES—HIS PULPIT MINISTRATIONS AND HIS SPEECHES—HIS STRONG WILL—CAUSES OF THE HOSTILITY WITH WHICH HE WAS REGARDED—HISTORY OF A BELFAST NEWSPAPER PROPRIETOR—STRONG ATTACHMENT OF DR. EDGAR'S FRIENDS—DR. EDGAR AT HOME—HIS PUBLIC SPIRIT—HIS GENEROSITY—ILLUSTRATIONS—HIS FAMILY—HIS POLITICS—HIS HABITS OF CAREFUL PREPARATION—HIS AVOIDANCE OF PERSONALITIES IN HIS PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS—HIS SENSITIVENESS—HIS ACTIVE BENEVOLENCE—BENEFITS HE CONFERRED ON THE IRISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—CONCLUSION.

DR. EDGAR possessed high intellectual powers, and often exhibited proofs of great ability. He had an excellent memory, a sound judgment, and a poetic fancy. But his mind was rather versatile and vigorous than comprehensive and profound. He could not patiently thread his way through complicated processes of thought; and, when knotty subjects came up for discussion, he was not always distinguished as a clear, cautious, and conclusive reasoner. He sometimes contemplated a question only from one point of view; and hence, he neither saw all the difficulties which surrounded it, nor made

due allowance for the perplexity which others experienced. He was naturally impulsive, and he occasionally spoke and acted rashly; but he had strong common sense; and, when he felt it necessary to be cautious in coming to a decision, he was seldom astray. His busy life had made him largely acquainted with men and things; he had great knowledge of human character; and, when bent on carrying out a favourite project, he often displayed extraordinary tact and sagacity.

Dr. Edgar was an excellent scholar; and there were few subjects of inquiry to which he had not more or less directed his attention. When a young man, he once, for four or five weeks, conducted the Logic Class in the Collegiate Department of the Belfast Academical Institution, during the illness of the Professor; and, at another time, he officiated a month on a like emergency for the Professor of Mathematics. He was a keen critic; and some tracts which he left ready for the press at the time of his death, supply evidence of the extreme care with which he corrected his compositions. He took great delight in poetry; his memory was richly stored with it; and, at the close of a day's toil, he would often refresh himself, and gratify those around him, by repeating, with great pathos and effect, select passages from some of his favourite bards. As an admirer of the Puritans, he could enter with all his heart into the spirit of "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers;" and frequently has he rehearsed with wonderful enthusiasm, the immortal verses :—

" The breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rock-bound coast,
And the woods against a stormy sky
Their giant branches tossed;

And the heavy night hung dark
The hills and waters o'er;
When a band of exiles moored their bark
On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conqueror comes
They, the true-hearted, came;
Not with the roll of the stirring drums,
And the trumpet that sings of fame.

Not as the flying come,
In silence and in fear;—
They shook the depths of the desert gloom,
With their hymns of lofty cheer.

Amidst the storm they sang,
And the stars heard, and the sea;
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang,
To the anthem of the free!

The ocean eagle soared
From his nest by the white wave's foam,
And the rocking pines of the forest roared—
This was their welcome home!

There were men with hoary hair
Amidst that pilgrim band;
Why had *they* come to wither there,
Away from their childhood's land?

There was woman's fearless eye,
Lit by her deep love's truth;
There was manhood's brow serenely high,
And the fiery heart of youth.

What sought they there afar?—
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?
They sought a faith's pure shrine!

Ay, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trode;
They have left unstained what there they found—
Freedom to worship God."

—*Mrs. Hemans.*

His devotional exercises in the pulpit were remarkable for their variety, originality, and unction. His prayers in the family, as well as in public, were pervaded by a vein of poetic feeling; and were singularly striking, solemn, and beautiful. He was an excellent expositor; and his discourses frequently displayed great power; but, as an ordinary preacher, he never enjoyed the popularity often attained by men of far inferior talents and accomplishments. His voice was not musical; and, to some, his manner was disagreeable. The monotony of protracted study was not in accordance with his active habits; and he was not very extensively acquainted with the literature of theology; but he had thought much on its doctrines; and, from conviction, he was strongly attached to the Calvinistic system. As a Professor, he exercised over the members of his class a most beneficial influence. He taught them that the great business of the minister is to work for Christ. "Those who grew up under his influence," says one of his most distinguished students, "bore away possibly from others a larger number of distinct and accurate conceptions, but from none did they receive so deep and lasting a conviction of the rightness, beauty, and nobleness of seeking the good of others, and leaving the world better than they found it."*

On the platform Dr. Edgar was a most effective speaker. His Temperance addresses again and again produced an amazing impression. Many of them may

* Rev. Dr. Hall of Dublin, in the *Evangelical Witness* for October, 1866.

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be quoted as presenting a rare combination of terse language, vigorous argument, broad humour, earnest appeals, and noble sentiments. During the progress of the Temperance Reformation, he more than once exhibited specimens of the most dignified and telling oratory. As he warmed with his subject his wonted carelessness of manner vanished; his whole frame seemed instinct with energy; his attitudes became graceful and majestic; and he poured forth strains of thrilling eloquence. But there were times, even in advanced life, when he apparently forgot himself, and indulged in comical allusions scarcely suited to the gravity of the occasion. He had an intense relish for a good joke; and, under the excitement of the moment, he could not well suppress it, though its introduction might be rather unseasonable.

He possessed one attribute necessary for all who are to be leaders of others. He had a strong will. He was desirous to be foremost in every movement with which he was connected; he laboured most vigorously when permitted to act alone; and he was somewhat impatient of interference or control. When he had once formed a resolution, he adhered to it with unflinching tenacity. In his Funeral Sermon, his friend the Rev. Dr. Morgan, who was well acquainted with him for nearly forty years, has called attention to this aspect of his character. "As he judged, and however he willed, and according to the promptings of his desires, he spoke and acted. * * * Whoever and whatever stood in his way must be pushed aside. His

mind was set on one object, and on one way of gaining it, and he did not always see the bearing of his course on other interests. He was thus sometimes hurried into offences. But even then he meant the thing that was right. He was himself willing to sacrifice everything for the end in view, and he acted as if others were like-minded. He did not seek himself, but the good he was bent on doing; and he hoped to carry all with him to the same issue."

Though greatly esteemed by those thoroughly acquainted with his character, Dr. Edgar was never a general favourite with the public. He had no reason whatever to be alarmed by the declaration, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" His stern assertion of the discipline of the church raised up against him a host of enemies; and, on this account, notwithstanding the countless proofs of his benevolence, he was denounced by many as severe and tyrannical. His zeal in the cause of temperance interfered with various private interests, and provoked the hostility of tipplers, and drunkards, publicans, and distillers. He was greatly disliked by Romanists and Unitarians, for he assailed their errors with argument, irony, and invective. There is such a thing as "speaking the truth in love;" and he sometimes, perhaps, gave offence by the unnecessary severity of his language. The use even of one coarse or harsh epithet, when it can be avoided with propriety, may be a grave indiscretion.

It sometimes happened that the most determined

assailants of Dr. Edgar were in the end led to acknowledge his substantial excellence. From one Belfast newspaper he uniformly received very scant justice; and, in its pages, he was often held up to ridicule, if not to execration. The proprietor, as was well known, fully approved of these attacks, and detested him as the father of the temperance reformation. This unhappy man himself at length became a slave to strong drink; and disease, generated by inebriety, threatened to bring him to the grave. Convinced that his only hope of recovery lay in complete abstinence from ardent spirits, he appeared one day at Dr. Edgar's hall door; solicited an interview; stated his situation; and requested leave to sign the temperance pledge. He was, of course, received very civilly, and permitted to enrol his name; but the visit must have been as humiliating to the subscriber as it was gratifying to the apostle of temperance.

Though Dr. Edgar had bitter foes, few men in the community lived in the midst of so large a circle of devoted friends. He delighted to perform acts of kindness; in the day of adversity his sympathy was never wanting; and many felt they owed him a debt of gratitude they could never repay. He was continually moving about in the town and neighbourhood of Belfast; his cordiality and cheerfulness made him always welcome in every family; and, at the time of his death, it was remarked that few men could have passed away whose removal would have been so much felt in so many homes.

In his domestic circle, Dr. Edgar appeared to much advantage. He was a fond husband, an affectionate father, a kind master, and a cheerful companion. The spiritual well-being of his children lay near his heart. The following letter, written many years ago to his eldest daughter, is a precious memorial of paternal piety:—

"My dear A——,—I hope you are turning to good account the opportunities and privileges you now enjoy. A chief reason for my allowing you and E—— to impose yourselves on Miss H.'s hospitality is, that believing her to be one who fears God, I am anxious that you should enjoy the advantage of her precept and example. Health, and even life itself, are nothing unless in connection with piety; and without religion, what real happiness can one enjoy for herself, and what can she do for others? My first and most earnest wish for you is, that you should devote yourself to God. If this be secured, all is safe. God is willing that you should love Him, and thus be happy in Him. Christ has died that you should have peace and joy and hope; and with the peace and hope of the gospel, how happy is life for oneself, and how encouraging to be useful to others! It is time that you should make an open profession of attachment to Christ's cause at the sacramental table, and to this you should direct your thoughts with all seriousness and prayer. This should not be done with a desire to please others, or to comply with custom, but from

a wish to obey Christ and honour Him. When Jesus has done so much for us, we should be thankful to have an opportunity to show forth our gratitude. I trust, therefore, that you will with all heart, and seriousness, and joyfulness too, devote yourself to your Redeemer's cause; and that while you try to be useful to others, you will seek the first and chief qualification for usefulness, an entire surrender of yourself to Christ, to be saved by Him in His own way, and to serve Him according to His own will.

"E——, I trust you will make a special object of your anxiety and prayer.

"I intended to go to bring you home by the Causeway, but as you have already seen the Causeway, this is unnecessary.—Ever your affectionate father,

"JOHN EDGAR."

Dr. Edgar was known all over the church as a generous giver. The munificence of his contributions often created astonishment. There were, indeed, occasions when he was merely the distributor of the bounty of his friends, for considerable sums were sometimes placed at his disposal; but his large donations to the Bi-centenary Fund, to the Free Church of Scotland, to the Ulster Female Penitentiary, as well as others which might be enumerated, came out of his own purse. His subscriptions rebuked prevailing parsimony, and elevated the standard of liberality. Nor was his generosity confined to public objects. He gave ungrudgingly to the poor, and many a time did he lend to the

needy when he had very little prospect of reimbursement. One day a lady called at his house and requested a private interview. She declined to give her name, and her face was so closely covered by a veil, that not one feature could be distinguished. She stated that, though a stranger to him, she was the daughter of one Belfast merchant, and the wife of another; that she was in extreme distress; that £5 would relieve her; and that, as a last resource—not knowing where else to make application—she had ventured to appeal to him for the loan. He was rather perplexed by this strange demand; but there was something about the manner and appearance of his visitor which led him to think that no imposition was intended; and, deeming it well to lean to the side of mercy, he gave her the money. After a long interval she returned; made herself known; handed to him the £5 with many thanks; and assured him that, by this timely aid, he had helped her over a crisis, and enabled her successfully to struggle with her difficulties. Once, on a visit to the west of Ireland, he heard of a widow lady who had seen better days, and who had fallen into the hands of a legal gentleman, who appeared far more desirous to swallow up her remaining property, than to turn it to the best account for the benefit of herself and her numerous family of little children. Having obtained from the lady herself an accurate statement of her position, he was convinced that she was grievously wronged, and he determined to take steps to obtain redress. He had the whole

family conveyed to his own house in University Square, Belfast; kept them there for several weeks; and, in the meantime, adopted effectual measures for compelling the legal cormorant to make a satisfactory settlement.

Surely there is something in the blessing of those who are ready to perish, and often some reward, even in this world, to him who causes the widow's heart to sing for joy! The temporal prosperity of Dr. Edgar's family has frequently excited observation. Though he himself never enjoyed great affluence, seldom has an Irish Presbyterian minister left his descendants in such comfortable circumstances. At the time of his death, all his children were settled in life except the youngest; and, for all, there was a suitable provision. One of his sons was married to the niece of an ex-M.P. for Belfast, and the other to the daughter of a deputy-lieutenant of the county of Sligo. His remains were followed to the grave by two sons-in-law—both Justices of the Peace, and one of them chairman of the most respectable civic Board connected with the metropolis of Ulster.* Well may many a child of the lord of a manor say to the offspring of this laborious Presbyterian minister, "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors."

Dr. Edgar was distinguished for public spirit. No-

* His son-in-law, Thomas Sinclair, Esq., J.P.—one of the noblest specimens of a Christian merchant Ireland ever produced—survived Dr. Edgar only a few months. He died, in the meridian of his usefulness, on the 2d of January, 1867.

thing that pertained to the prosperity of Belfast, or of the country at large, was regarded by him with indifference. His exertions for the benefit of the destitute sick and of the houseless poor, for the promotion of temperance, and for the relief of starvation, all illustrate his philanthropy and his patriotism. In 1847, when the famine was spreading misery throughout Ireland, he took an active part in the convocation of a public meeting of his townsmen for the purpose of directing the attention of the legislature to the waste of human food produced by the manufacture of whisky. At the meeting he made an able speech, subsequently printed in a separate form, and succeeded in carrying a resolution calling on Government to "stop the distilleries." He watched with the utmost solicitude the proceedings of Her Majesty's ministers, in regard to Collegiate Education, and exercised no little influence in some of the appointments to Professorships in the Northern Queen's College. When the affairs of the Belfast Town Council became embarrassed, he could not contemplate at his ease the ruin which threatened a considerable number of his respected fellow-citizens; and many an anxious hour did he spend in endeavouring to put a stop to the municipal Chancery litigation.

Though Dr. Edgar lived for nearly half a century in a place where party spirit was often at the boiling point, he never took a prominent share in the war of borough politics. He had no sympathy either with High Church Toryism or with rabid Radicalism. He cherished a great respect for the late Sir Robert Peel,

who honoured him with many tokens of attention; but, on the whole, his political leanings were rather towards the views of such statesmen as Earl Russell, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and the late Earl of Carlisle. On principle, however, he abstained from political partizanship. He believed that a minister of the gospel, who mixes himself up with the turmoil of electioneering struggles, lowers his character and injures his usefulness. In only one case did he appear to deviate from this course, and even then he took no public part in the contest. In 1857, when Thomas M'Clure, Esq., was a candidate for the representation of Belfast, Dr. Edgar gave him his cordial aid. Mr. M'Clure had been his tried friend in the year of famine; as Secretary of the Committee of the Belfast Relief Fund for Ireland, he had strenuously assisted him in his efforts on behalf of his famishing countrymen; he had been long known as a useful and upright citizen; and Dr. Edgar believed that his return to Parliament would have done much to promote the peace of the town, to discourage party spirit, and to prepare the way for the settlement of the suit in which so many members of the Corporation were entangled. Nor was the Presbyterian Professor of Theology the only ecclesiastic of distinction enlisted on the side of Mr. M'Clure. Had a stranger stepped into Dr. Edgar's parlour in University Square, about the time of the election, he might have found the Right Reverend Dr. Knox, Lord Bishop of Down and Connor and Dromore, sitting in conclave with some of the more influential Liberals,

and concocting measures to strengthen the interest of the Presbyterian candidate.

Though Dr. Edgar was a ready speaker, he did not presume on his facility of expression. When any question of importance was about to be publicly discussed, he accurately prepared himself for the occasion. Many of his speeches, which might have been taken for extempore effusions, were, in reality, carefully premeditated. "It is all nonsense," he would say, "to talk of effective extempore speaking. A man may make a happy hit for once without preparation; but, to be thorough, he must prepare. He may not, indeed, have prepared for that special occasion, but, if he is worth anything, he is giving out what he thought over and prepared before." He used to say that he never entered the pulpit without having studied his subject and arranged his ideas. He acted in this way from a sense of duty, as he believed he could not efficiently discharge his high commission, or rightly divide the word of truth, were he to indulge in indolence, and trust to the moment for words and ideas to fill up the passing hour. Thus it was that his public addresses were often so full of matter, and so well fitted to guide or influence the opinions of others.

In the debates which arose in the courts of the church, few men were more careful to avoid giving offence than Dr. Edgar. He could speak with great severity of error and superstition; and he employed strong language when he denounced Popery and Socinianism; but he abhorred discord among brethren. In Presby-

terian judicatories, where all are on an equality, and where so much liberty of discussion is permitted, personal altercations sometimes occur; but Dr. Edgar was rarely a party in such disputes, and still more rarely the aggressor. If he was convinced that any minister was a wolf in sheep's clothing, he had no hesitation in arraigning him at the bar of the Presbytery as unworthy of his position; but he often listened to attacks on himself with admirable forbearance. When conducting the Temperance agitation, he was repeatedly opposed in the public prints; and he responded to every adversary who was likely to endanger his cause; but, in his rejoinders, he most conscientiously avoided personalities; and he never had occasion to reply a second time to any assailant.

Persons who met him only once or twice might be struck with his rough exterior, and might imagine that he cared little what others thought of him. Those who adopted such a conclusion made a great mistake. He was exceedingly jealous of his reputation, and felt most acutely any severe or unkind remark. No man could more highly appreciate or better remember commendation; and it may be that he sometimes betrayed a little weakness when speaking of his labours and his success. He had a warm heart; he was susceptible of strong antipathies as well as of strong attachments; and whilst he had too much candour to profess respect when he did not feel it, he had too much of the spirit of a Christian to revenge even the basest treatment. He has been known, again and again, to perform offices

of kindness for those who had acted towards him unhandsomely, or who had endeavoured to do him injury.

Dr. Edgar has bequeathed to all ministers of the Gospel a noble example of a life of usefulness. It may be said of him, as of his Great Master, that "he went about doing good." Whatever his hand found to do, he did it with his might. He was felt to be of service in every place where he had any influence. Upwards of a quarter of a century ago, he was appointed a Governor of the Belfast District Lunatic Asylum for Down and Antrim; and, a few years before his death, at the request of his colleagues, he prepared a statement, "on increased accommodation for the Lunatic Poor," addressed to the Grand Jurors of the two counties.* Even when the disease which brought him to the grave was upon him—he was meditating new schemes of benevolence. The meeting which led to the establishment of the Presbyterian Orphan Society, assembled in his drawing room; and, before his decease, he had projected the foundation of an Asylum for Idiots. Some who narrowly marked his career have described him as ambitious; but, if there was any ground for the imputation, surely "his failings leaned to virtue's side;" for he was ambitious to be known as a man who served his generation according to the will of God.

The benefits which he has conferred on the Irish

*This document, dated 4th March, 1861, is signed on behalf of the Governors, by the Lord Bishop of Down and Connor and Dromore, as Chairman.

Presbyterian Church cannot well be estimated. If the tyranny of drinking customs has been abolished in many parts of Ulster, and if young ministers are not now exposed to temptations which ruined many of their predecessors, the change must, under God, be ascribed to the Apostle of Temperance. If, within the last thirty years, twenty new Presbyterian Churches have been reared in Belfast and its vicinity, he who is now no more had no small share in their erection. If Irish Presbyterians are now gathered into a General Assembly, Dr. Edgar did much to promote their union. If Belfast has now a Presbyterian College free of rent and free of debt, Dr. Edgar obtained the site, and collected a large portion of the money to defray the expense of the building. If two hundred new Presbyterian Manses have lately been scattered over Ireland, Dr. Edgar exerted himself to swell the fund which assisted in their construction. If about twenty new Presbyterian Churches have recently appeared in Connaught, they owe their existence almost entirely to him who is gone.

Ministers of the Gospel! learn from this little volume in how many ways you may honour Christ. Let His glory be your great aim. Men even of higher talent than Dr. Edgar have remained quite as long in the world, and yet have left behind them nothing to perpetuate their memory. Their genius has blazed like a meteor for a time, and they have then passed away into oblivion. They lived for themselves; they courted fame; and they were soon forgotten. Those who

build the house of God, build for eternity; and their work abides. The Great King has said, "Them that honour me, I will honour;" and, even in this world, the true builders of the church have often an enduring reputation. They leave their mark on posterity. Their memorial cannot be obliterated by the destruction of a painting, or the breaking of a slab of marble. Dr. Edgar has left behind him an honoured name, not because he was a highly-gifted orator, or a profound theologian, or a scholar of unrivalled excellence—for neither as a public speaker, nor a divine, nor a man of learning was his superiority remarkable—but because he diligently improved the opportunities of usefulness presented to him, and was instant in season and out of season in doing good. He was not without many of the infirmities of humanity; but he was a faithful servant of Jesus Christ; and he will be known to the latest generations in the Presbyterian Church of Ireland as "a burning and a shining light."

APPENDIX.

The following are specimens of the Prize Poem on the death of the Princess Charlotte, mentioned p. 5:—

* * * * *

That gloomy night, before a woeful day,
On stately couch the royal patient lay;

* * * * *

In pains still patient, meek, and all resigned,
No weight of woe could crush her mighty mind,
Though racking torture shook her tender frame,
Her soul unshaken still remained the same,
Ah, who can tell—who but a mother knows
The life-consuming pain of travail throes?

But now is sorrow past and anguish gone,
When Britain's princess bears her first-born son?
Ah, no! with burst of grief and anguish wild,
Britannia shrieked to see—a still-born child.
That child—she fondly hoped one day to see
Lord of her isles, the land of liberty—
A lifeless corpse. In woe her bosom heaves,
As for her lovely son she inly grieves;
And with a heart oppressed with sorrow's weight,
In broken accents thus she mourns his fate.
"Ah, hapless child," she said, "thy race is run,
Thy course is finished, ere 'tis well begun;

Thy morning sun has set, just as it rose,
Thy day of life has seen no evening close;
The morn's sweet light, the sun's enlivening ray,
On thy closed eyes, alas! in vain shall play;
No sun, nor moon, nor star shall glad thy sight—
All, all, to thee is gloom, and blackest night.
In vain for thee their gifts the graces bear,
In vain a crown salutes thee as its heir;
No crown, nor laurel e'er shall grace thy head,
Nor torch of glory light thy lowly bed.
A father's fondness thou shalt never know,
With filial love thy breast shall never glow.
No doating sire nor mother e'er shall sip,
The balmy sweetness of thy infant lip.
Shall no dear hand, no kind parental care,
For thee the pleasing sport and toy prepare?
Shall no fond mother ever sing to thee,
With joyous heart, the soothing lullaby?
Nor anxious care, nor fond maternal fear,
O'er thy young follies drop affection's tear?
Ah, no! the breezy morn its tears shall shed,
In pearly dewdrops, on thy infant head;
Around thy tomb the wintry winds shall rave,
And vernal flowrets crown thy little grave."

* * * * *

With what sad woe a mother's bosom bled,
When a rash voice exclaimed—"The child is dead!"
Yet still, though pain and poignant grief combine,
To bring her low, she knows not to repine;
With patient heart she bears the chastening rod,
E'en for affliction, she adores her God.

* * * * *

With tears she prayed, nor knew her own sad doom,
Fated so soon to moulder in the tomb,
Ere morn to see death's bleak and gloomy shore,
And go the way her child had gone before.

After the birth she quietly reposed,
As though the saddening scene of pain were closed.
* * * * *
The noble prince, by grief and care oppress'd,
Yet buoyed on tide of hope, had sunk to rest,
Swift thoughts the while, not sleep can chase away,
They course his brain, and in his bosom play,
For though to rest his weary limbs resign'd—
In troubled dreams they haunt his anxious mind.
An iv'ry throne with pearls and rubies bright,
And set with em'ralds, rose before his sight,
High on a spacious plain erect it stood,
And round it throng'd a countless multitude,
Whose eager looks and bodies forward bent,
Show them impatient for some great event—
The list'ning crowd now seem to hear from far
The rapid rolling of a coming car;
"She comes, she comes!" ten thousand voices cry;
"She comes, she comes!" the echoing hills reply,
As the light shallop skims the briny main,
So the swift chariot flies along the plain.
Two fiery steeds, which naught but paw the air,
In rapid flight a beauteous female bear,
Whose angel form, and hair of waving gold,
Seem less of earthly than of heavenly mould.
The steeds approach—they stop; and with a bound
The noble charioteer springs to the ground.
With firm and godlike step she moves along,
Part to the right and left the admiring throng,
She nears the throne—when lo! a haggard form,
Fierce as the spirit of the howling storm,
Armed with an iron scythe, and blood-stain'd dart,
Springs through the crowd, and stabs her to the heart!
Eternal shades come swimming o'er her eyes,
Prone in the dust the beauteous princess lies;
With blood congealed, th' astonished people gaze,

And stifle in their birth half form'd huzzas.

* * * * *

And now the haggard form, and bleeding fair,
Like midnight phantoms, vanish into air.
The car, the crowd, the throne—all disappear,
And in their room is plac'd a funeral bier.
Cloth'd in death's black array around it stand,
With eyes suffus'd in tears, a mournful band,
In luxury of woe they seem to bend
O'er the last relics of some dearest friend.
So sad, so strange, the whole appearance seems,
That e'en the astonished dreamer thinks he dreams.
With warm impatience now his bosom glows
To know the fatal cause of all their woes;
And while his trembling steps approach the bier,
Starts from his eye the sympathetic tear.
He presses through the throng, and bends his head,
To mark the features of the noble dead.
Oh! what a sight now meets his wond'ring eyes!
Before him, pale in death, his Charlotte lies.
So dread a shock the ties of slumber breaks,
And with a wild convulsive start he wakes;
Starts from his couch in haste, and trembling goes
To witness real scenes of real woes.

* * * * *

No human skill can stay the fleeting breath,
Nor force arrest the iron hand of death.
Stern Fate's irrevocable bolt has sped,
And fall it must on her devoted head.
Convulsive heavings wreck her tender frame,
And feebly glimmering fades the vital flame.
The blood congeal'd, to its last hold retreats;
The pulse now pauses—now again it beats;
Again she breathes—she faints—again revives,
'Gainst death averse to yield, lo! nature strives.
But now the sad and dubious conflict's oer,

The fluttering pulse now stops—to beat no more.

* * * * *

The fiery tempests howl, old ocean roars,
And Britain trembles to her farthest shores,
With tenfold night the gloomy sky's o'ercast,
And guardian spirits shriek upon the blast ;
Fame's thousand tongues proclaim from shore to shore,
That England's daughter is, alas! no more.

* * * * *

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